Melva James

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SELECTIONS
FROM THE PROSE WORKS OF
MATTHEW ARNOLD

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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PREFACE

This book of selections aims to furnish examples of Arnold's prose in all the fields in which it characteristically employed itself except that of religion. It has seemed better to omit all such material than to attempt inclusion of a few extracts which could hardly give any adequate notion of Arnold's work in this department. Something, however, of his method in religious criticism can be discerned by a perusal of the chapter on *Hebraism and Hellenism*, selected from *Culture and Anarchy*. Most of Arnold's leading ideas are represented in this volume, but the decision to use entire essays so far as feasible has naturally precluded the possibility of gathering all the important utterances together. The basis of division and grouping of the selections is made sufficiently obvious by the headings. In the division of literary criticism the endeavor has been to illustrate Arnold's cosmopolitanism by essays of first-rate importance dealing with the four literatures with which he was well acquainted. In the notes, conciseness with a reasonable degree of thoroughness has been the principle followed.

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INTRODUCTION

I

"The gray hairs on my head are becoming more and more numerous, and I sometimes grow impatient of getting old amidst a press of occupations and labor for which, after all, I was not born. But we are not here to have facilities found us for doing the work we like, but to make them." This sentence, written in a letter to his mother in his fortieth year, admirably expresses Arnold's courage, cheerfulness, and devotion in the midst of an exacting round of commonplace duties, and at the same time the energy and determination with which he responded to the imperative need of liberating work of a higher order, that he might keep himself, as he says in another letter, "from feeling starved and shrunk up." The two feelings directed the course of his life to the end, a life characterized no less by allegiance to "the lowliest duties" than by brilliant success in a more attractive field.

Life and Personality

Matthew Arnold was born at Laleham, December 24, 1822, the eldest son of Thomas Arnold, the great head master of Rugby. He was educated at Laleham, Winchester, Rugby, and Balliol College, Oxford. In 1845 he was elected a fellow of Oriel, but Arnold desired to be a man of the world, and the security of college cloisters and garden walls could not long attract him. Of a deep affection for Oxford his letters and his books speak unmistakably, but little record of his Oxford life remains aside from the well-known lines of Principal Shairp, in which he is spoken of as

> So full of power, yet blithe and debonair,
> Rallying his friends with pleasant banter gay.

From Oxford he returned to teach classics at Rugby, and in 1847 he was appointed private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, then Lord President of the Council. In 1851, the year of his marriage, he became inspector of schools, and

in this service he continued until two years before his death. As an inspector, the letters give us a picture of Arnold toiling over examination papers, and hurrying from place to place, covering great distances, often going without lunch or dinner, or seeking the doubtful solace of a bun, eaten "before the astonished school." His services to the cause of English education were great, both in the direction of personal inspiration to teachers and students, and in thoughtful discussion of national problems. Much time was spent in investigating foreign systems, and his *Report upon Schools and Universities on the Continent* was enlightened and suggestive.

Arnold's first volume of poems appeared in 1849, and by 1853 the larger part of his poetry was published. Four years later he was appointed Professor of Poetry at Oxford. Of his prose, the first book to attract wide notice was that containing the lectures *On Translating Homer* delivered from the chair of Poetry and published in 1861–62. From this time until the year of his death appeared the remarkable series of critical writings which have placed him in the front rank of the men of letters of his century. He continued faithfully to fulfill his duties as school inspector until April, 1886, when he resigned after a service of thirty-five years. He died of heart trouble on April 15, 1888, at Liverpool.

The testimony to Arnold's personal charm, to his cheerfulness, his urbanity, his tolerance and charity, is remarkably uniform. He is described by one who knew him as "the most sociable, the most lovable, the most companionable of men"; by another as "preëminently a good man, gentle, generous, enduring, laborious." His letters are among the precious writings of our time, not because of the beauty or inimitableness of detail, but because of the completed picture which they make. They do not, like the Carlyle-Emerson correspondence, show a hand that could not set pen to paper without writing picturesquely, but they do reveal a character of great soundness and sweetness, and one in which the affections play a surprisingly important part, the love of flowers and books, of family and friends, and of his fellow men.

His life was human, kindly and unselfish, and he allowed no clash between the pursuit of personal perfection and devotion to the public cause, even when the latter demanded sacrifice of the most cherished projects and adherence to the most irritating drudgery.

II

Arnold's Place among Nineteenth-Century Teachers

By those who go to literature primarily for a practical wisdom presented in terms applicable to modern life, the work of Arnold will be reckoned highly important, if not indispensable. He will be placed by them among the great humanizers of the last century, and by comparison with his contemporaries will be seen to have furnished a complementary contribution of the highest value. Of the other great teachers whose work may most fitly be compared with his, two were preëminently men of feeling. Carlyle was governed by an overmastering moral fervor which gave great weight to his utterances, but which exercised itself in a narrow field and which often distorted and misinterpreted the facts. Ruskin was governed by his affections, and though an ardent lover of truth and beauty, was often the victim of caprice and extravagance. Emerson and Arnold, on the other hand, were governed primarily by the intellect, but with quite different results. Emerson presents life in its ideality; he comparatively neglects life in its phenomenal aspect, that is, as it appears to the ordinary man. Arnold, while not without emotional equipment, and inspired by idealism of a high order, introduces a yet larger element of practical reason. *Tendens manus ripæ ulterioris amore*, he is yet first of all a man of this world. His chief instrument is common sense, and he looks at questions from the point of view of the highly intelligent and cultivated man. His dislike of metaphysics was as deep as Ruskin's, and he was impatient of abstractions of any sort. With as great a desire to further the true progress of his time as Carlyle or Ruskin, he joined a greater calmness and disinterestedness. "To be less and less personal in one's desires and workings" he learned to look upon as after all

the great matter. Of the lessons that are impressed upon us by his whole life and work rather than by specific teachings, perhaps the most precious is the inspiration to live our lives thoughtfully, in no haphazard and hand-to-mouth way, and to live always for the idea and the spirit, making all things else subservient. He does not dazzle us with extraordinary power prodigally spent, but he was a good steward of natural gifts, high, though below the highest. His life of forethought and reason may be profitably compared with a life spoiled by passion and animalism like that of Byron or of Burns. His counsels are the fruit of this well-ordered life and are perfectly in consonance with it. While he was a man of less striking personality and less brilliant literary gift than some of his contemporaries, and though his appeal was without the moving power that comes from great emotion, we find a compensation in his greater balance and sanity. He makes singularly few mistakes, and these chiefly of detail. Of all the teachings of the age his ideal of perfection is the wisest and the most permanent.

III

His Teachers and his Personal Philosophy

Arnold's poetry is the poetry of meditation and not the poetry of passion; it comes from "the depth and not the tumult of the soul"; it does not make us more joyful, but it helps us to greater depth of vision, greater detachment, greater power of self-possession. Our concern here is chiefly with its relation to the prose, and this, too, is a definite and important relation. In his prose Arnold gives such result of his observation and meditation as he believes may be gathered into the form of counsel, criticism, and warning to his age. In his poetry, which preceded the prose, we find rather the processes through which he reached these conclusions; we learn what is the nature of his communing upon life, not as it affects society, but as it fronts the individual; we learn who are the great thinkers of the past who came to his help in the straits of life, and what is the armor which they furnished for his soul in its times of stress.

One result of a perusal of the poems is to counteract the impression often produced by the jaunty air assumed in the prose. The real substance of Arnold's thought is characterized by a deep seriousness; no one felt more deeply the spiritual unrest and distraction of his age. More than one poem is an expression of its mental and spiritual sickness, its doubt, ennui, and melancholy. Yet beside such poems as *Dover Beach* and *Stagirius* should be placed the lines from *Westminster Abbey*: —

> For this and that way swings
> The flux of mortal things,
> Though moving inly to one far-set goal.

Out of this entanglement and distraction Arnold turned for help to those writers who seemed most perfectly to have seized upon the eternal verities, to have escaped out of the storm of conflict and to have gained calm and peaceful seats. Carlyle and Ruskin, Byron and Shelley, were stained with the blood of battle, they raged in the heat of controversy; Arnold could not accept them as his teachers. But the Greek poets and the ancient Stoic philosophers have nothing of this dust and heat about them, and to them Arnold turns to gather truth and to imitate their spirit. Similarly, two poets of modern times, Goethe and Wordsworth, have won tranquillity. They, too, become his teachers. Arnold's chief guides for life are, then, these: two Greek poets, Sophocles and Homer; two ancient philosophers, Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus; two modern poets, Goethe and Wordsworth.

In Homer and Sophocles, Arnold sought what we may call the Greek spirit. What he conceived this spirit to be as expressed in art, we find in the essay on *Literature and Science*, "fit details strictly combined, in view of a large general result nobly conceived." In Sophocles, Arnold found the same spirit interpreting life with a vision that "saw life steadily and saw it whole." In another Greek idea, that of fate, he is also greatly interested, though his conception of it is modified by the influence of Christianity. From the Greek poets, then, Arnold derived a sense of the large part which destiny plays in our lives and the wisdom of conforming our lives to necessity; the impor-

tance of conceiving of life as directed toward a simple, large, and noble end; and the desirability of maintaining a balance among the demands that life makes on us, of adapting fit details to the main purpose of life.

Among modern writers Arnold turned first to Goethe, "Europe's sagest head, Physician of the Iron Age." One of the things that he learned from this source was the value of detachment. In the midst of the turmoil of life, Goethe found refuge in Art. He is the great modern example of a man who has been able to separate himself from the struggle of life and watch it calmly.

> He who hath watch'd, not shared the strife,
> Knows how the day hath gone.

Aloofness, provided it be not selfish, has its own value, and, indeed, isolation must be recognized as a law of our existence.

> Thin, thin the pleasant human noises grow,
> And faint the city gleams;
> Rare the lone pastoral huts — Marvel not thou!
> The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,
> But to the stars and the cold lunar beams;
> Alone the sun rises, and alone
> Spring the great streams.

From Goethe, also, Arnold derived the gospel of culture and faith in the intellectual life. It is significant that while Carlyle and Arnold may both be looked upon as disciples of Goethe, Carlyle's most characteristic quotation from his master is his injunction to us to "do the task that lies nearest us," while Arnold's is such a maxim as, "To act is easy, to think is hard."

In some ways Wordsworth was for Arnold a personality even more congenial than Goethe. His range, to be sure, is narrow, but he, too, has attained spiritual peace. His life, secure among its English hills and lakes, was untroubled in its faith. Wordsworth strongly reinforces three things in Arnold, the ability to derive from nature its "healing power" and to share and be glad in "the wonder and bloom of the world"; truth to the deeper spiritual life and strength to keep his soul

> Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
> Firm to the mark, not spent on other things;

and finally, a satisfaction in the cheerful and serene performance of duty, the spirit of "toil unsevered from tranquillity," sharing in the world's work, yet keeping "free from dust and soil."

From the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and from the slave Epictetus alike, Arnold learned to look within for "the aids to noble life." Overshadowed on all sides by the "uno'erleaped mountains of necessity," we must learn to resign our passionate hopes "for quiet and a fearless mind," to merge the self in obedience to universal law, and to keep ever before our minds

> The pure eternal course of life,
> Not human combatings with death.

No conviction is more frequently reiterated in Arnold's poetry than that of the wisdom of resignation and self-dependence.

These great masters, then, strengthened Arnold in those high instincts which needed nourishment in a day of spiritual unrest. From the Greek poets he learned to look at life steadily and as a whole, to direct it toward simple and noble ends, and to preserve in it a balance and perfection of parts. From Goethe he derived the lessons of detachment and self-culture. From Wordsworth he learned to find peace in nature, to pursue an unworldly purpose, and to be content with humble duties. From the Stoics he learned, especially, self-dependence and resignation. In general, he endeavored to follow an ideal of perfection and to distinguish always between temporary demands and eternal values.

IV

Theory of Criticism and Equipment as a Critic

In passing from poetry to criticism, Arnold did not feel that he was descending to a lower level. Rather he felt that he was helping to lift criticism to a position of equality with more properly creative work. The most noticeable thing about his definition of criticism is its lofty ambition. It is "the disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world," and its

more ultimate purpose is "to keep man from a self-satisfaction which is retarding and vulgarizing, to lead him towards perfection." It is not to be confined to art and literature, but is to include within its scope society, politics, and religion. It is not only to censure that which is blameworthy, but to appreciate and popularize the best.

For this work great virtues are demanded of the critic. Foremost of these is disinterestedness. "If I know your sect, I anticipate your argument," says Emerson in the essay on *Self-Reliance*. Similarly Arnold warns the critic against partisanship. It is better that he refrain from active participation in politics, social or humanitarian work. Connected with this is another requisite, that of clearness of vision. One of the great disadvantages of partisanship is that it blinds the partisan. But the critical effort is described as "the effort to see the object as in itself it really is." This is best accomplished by approaching truth in as many ways and from as many sides as possible.

Another precaution for the critic who would retain clearness of vision is the avoidance of abstract systems, which petrify and hinder the necessary flexibility of mind. Coolness of temper is also enjoined and scrupulously practiced. "It is only by remaining collected . . . that the critic can do the practical man any service"; and again: "Even in one's ridicule one must preserve a sweetness and good humor" (letter to his mother, October 27, 1863). In addition to these virtues, which in Arnold's opinion comprised the qualities most requisite for salutary criticism, certain others are strikingly illustrated by Arnold's own mind and methods: the endeavor to understand, to sympathize with, and to guide intelligently the main tendencies of his age, rather than violently to oppose them; at the same time the courage to present unpleasant antidotes to its faults and to keep from fostering a people in its own conceit; and finally, amidst many discouragements, the retention of a high faith in spiritual progress and an unwavering belief that the ideal life is "the normal life as we shall one day see it."

Criticism, to be effective, requires also an adequate style. In Arnold's discussion of style, much stress is laid on its

basis in character, and much upon the transparent quality of true style which allows that basic character to shine through. Such words as "limpidness," "simplicity," "lucidity," are favorites. Clearness and effectiveness are the qualities that he most highly valued. The latter he gained especially through the crystallization of his thought into certain telling phrases, such as "Philistinism," "sweetness and light," "the grand style," etc. That this habit was attended with dangers, that his readers were likely to get hold of his phrases and think that they had thereby mastered his thought, he realized. Perhaps he hardly realized the danger to the coiner of apothegms himself, that of being content with a half truth when the whole truth cannot be conveniently crowded into narrow compass. Herein lies, I think, the chief source of Arnold's occasional failure to quite satisfy our sense of adequacy or of justice, as, for instance, in his celebrated handling of the four ways of regarding nature, or the passage in which he describes the sterner self of the working-class as liking "bawling, hustling, and smashing; the lighter self, beer."

By emotionalism, however, he does not allow himself to be betrayed, and he does not indulge in rhythmical prose or rhapsody, though occasionally his writing has a truly poetical quality resulting from the quiet but deep feeling which rises in connection with a subject on which the mind has long brooded with affection, as in the tribute to Oxford at the beginning of the *Essay on Emerson*. Sometimes, on the other hand, a certain pedagogic stiffness appears, as if the writer feared that the dullness of comprehension of his readers would not allow them to grasp even the simplest conceptions without a patient insistence on the literal fact.

One can by no means pass over Arnold's humor in a discussion of his style, yet humor is certainly a secondary matter with him, in spite of the frequency of its appearance. It is not much found in his more intimate and personal writing, his poetry and his familiar letters. In such a book as *Friendship's Garland*, where it is most in evidence, it is plainly a literary weapon deliberately assumed. In fact, Arnold is almost too conscious of the value of

humor in the gentle warfare in which he had enlisted. Its most frequent form is that of playful satire; it is the product of keen wit and sane mind, and it is always directed toward some serious purpose, rarely, if ever, existing as an end in itself.

V

Literary Criticism

The first volume of *Essays in Criticism* was published in 1865. That a book of essays on literary subjects, apparently so diverse in character, so lacking in outer unity, and so little subject to system of any sort, should take so definite a place in the history of criticism and make so single an impression upon the reader proves its possession of a dominant and important idea, impelled by a new and weighty power of personality. What Arnold called his "sinuous, easy, unpolemical mode of proceeding" tends to disguise the seriousness and unity of purpose which lie behind nearly all of these essays, but an uninterrupted perusal of the two volumes of *Essays in Criticism* and the volume of *Mixed Essays* discloses what that purpose is. The essays may roughly be divided into two classes, those which deal with single writers and those discussing subjects of more general nature. The purpose of both is what Arnold himself has called "the humanization of man in society." In the former he selects some person exemplifying a trait, in the latter he selects some general idea, which he deems of importance for our further humanization, and in easy, unsystematic fashion unfolds and illustrates it for us. But in spite of this unlabored method he takes care somewhere in the essay to seize upon a phrase that shall bring home to us the essence of his theme and to make it salient enough so as not to escape us. How much space shall be devoted to exposition, and how much to illustration, depends largely on the familiarity of his subject to his readers. Besides the general purpose of humanization, two other considerations guide him: the racial shortcomings of the English people and the needs of his age. The English are less in need of energizing and moralizing than of intellectualizing, refining, and inspiring with the passion for perfection. This need accord-

ingly determines the choice in most cases. So Milton presents an example of "sure and flawless perfection of rhythm and diction"; Joubert is characterized by his intense care of "perfecting himself"; Falkland is "our martyr of sweetness and light, of lucidity of mind and largeness of temper"; George Sand is admirable because of her desire to make the ideal life the normal one; Emerson is "the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit."

The belief that poetry is our best instrument for humanization determines Arnold's loyalty to that form of art; that classical art is superior to modern in clarity, harmony, and wholeness of effect, determines his preference for classic, especially for Greek poetry. He thus represents a reaction against the romantic movement, yet has experienced the emotional deepening which that movement brought with it. Accordingly, he finds a shallowness in the pseudo-classicism of Pope and his contemporaries, and turns rather to Sophocles on the one hand and Goethe on the other for his exemplars. He feels "the peculiar charm and aroma of the Middle Age," but retains "a strong sense of the irrationality of that period and of those who take it seriously, and play at restoring it" (letter to Miss Arnold, December 17, 1860); and again: "No one has a stronger and more abiding sense than I have of the 'dæmonic' element — as Goethe called it — which underlies and encompasses our life; but I think, as Goethe thought, that the right thing is while conscious of this element, and of all that there is inexplicable round one, to keep pushing on one's posts into the darkness, and to establish no post that is not perfectly in light and firm" (letter to his mother, March 3, 1865).

VI

Criticism of Society, Politics, and Religion

Like the work of all clear thinkers, Arnold's writing proceeds from a few governing and controlling principles. It is natural, therefore, that we should find in his criticism of society a repetition of the ideas already encountered in his literary criticism. Of these, the chief is that of "culture," the theme

of his most typical book, *Culture and Anarchy*, published in 1869. Indeed, it is interesting to see how closely related his doctrine of culture is to his theory of criticism, already expounded. True criticism, we have seen, consists in an "endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." The shortest definition that Arnold gives of culture is "a study of perfection." But how may one pursue perfection? Evidently by putting oneself in the way of learning the best that is known and thought, and by making it a part of oneself. The relation of the critic to culture thereupon becomes evident. He is the appointed apostle of culture. He undertakes as his duty in life to seek out and to minister to others the means of self-improvement, discriminating the evil and the specious from the good and the genuine, rendering the former contemptible and the latter attractive. But in a degree all seekers after culture must be critics also. Both pursue the same objects, the best that is thought and known. Both, too, must propagate it; for culture consists in general expansion, and the last degree of personal perfection is attained only when shared with one's fellows. The critic and the true man of culture are, therefore, at bottom, the same, though Arnold does not specifically point this out. But the two ideals united in himself direct all his endeavor. As a man of culture he is intent chiefly upon the acquisition of the means of perfection; as a critic, upon their elucidation and propagation.

This sufficiently answers the charge of selfishness that is frequently brought against the gospel of culture. It would never have been brought if its critics had not perversely shut their eyes to Arnold's express statements that perfection consists in "a general expansion"; that it "is not possible while the individual remains isolated"; that one of its characteristics is "increased sympathy," as well as "increased sweetness, increased light, increased life." The other common charge of dilettanteism, brought by such opponents as Professor Huxley and Mr. Frederic Harrison, deserves hardly more consideration. Arnold has made it sufficiently clear that he does not mean by culture "a smattering of Greek and Latin," but a deepening

and strengthening of our whole spiritual nature by all the means at our command. No other ideal of the century is so satisfactory as this of Arnold's. The ideal of social democracy, as commonly followed, tends, as Arnold has pointed out, to exalt the average man, while culture exalts man at his best. The scientific ideal, divorced from a general cultural aim, appeals "to a limited faculty and not to the whole man." The religious ideal, too exclusively cultivated, dwarfs the sense of beauty and is marked by narrowness. Culture includes religion as its most valuable component, but goes beyond it.

The fact that Arnold, in his social as in his literary criticism, laid the chief stress upon the intellectual rather than the moral elements of culture, was due to his constant desire to adapt his thought to the condition of his age and nation. The prevailing characteristics of the English people he believed to be energy and honesty. These he contrasts with the chief characteristics of the Athenians, openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence. As the best type of culture, that is, of perfected humanity, for the Englishman to emulate, he turns, therefore, to Greece in the time of Sophocles. Greece, to be sure, failed because of the lack of that very Hebraism which England possesses and to which she owes her strength. But if to this strength of moral fiber could be added the openness of mind, flexibility of intelligence, and love of beauty which distinguished the Greeks in their best period, a truly great civilization would result. That this ideal will in the end prevail, he has little doubt. The strain of sadness, melancholy, and depression which appears in Arnold's poetry is rigidly excluded from his prose. Both despondency and violence are forbidden to the believer in culture. "We go the way the human race is going," he says at the close of *Culture and Anarchy*.

Arnold's incursion into the field of religion has been looked upon by many as a mistake. Religion is with most people a matter of closer interest and is less discussable than literary criticism. *Literature and Dogma* aroused much antagonism on this account. Moreover, it cannot be denied that Arnold was not well enough equipped in this

field to prevent him from making a good many mistakes. But that the upshot of his religious teaching is wholesome and edifying can hardly be denied. Arnold's spirit is a deeply religious one, and his purpose in his religious books was to save what was valuable in religion by separating it from what was non-essential. He thought of himself always as a friend, not as an enemy, of religion. The purpose of all his religious writings, of which *St. Paul and Protestantism*, 1870, and *Literature and Dogma*, 1873, are the most important, is the same, to show the natural truth of religion and to strengthen its position by freeing it from dependence on dogma and historical evidence, and especially to make clear the essential value of Christianity. Conformity with reason, true spirituality, and freedom from materialistic interpretation were for him the bases of sound faith. That Arnold's religious writing is thoroughly spiritual in its aim and tendency has, I think, never been questioned, and we need only examine some of his leading definitions to become convinced of this. Thus, religion is described as "that which binds and holds us to the practice of righteousness"; faith is the "power, preëminently, of holding fast to an unseen power of goodness"; God is "the power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness"; immortality is a union of one's life with an eternal order that never dies. Arnold did not without reluctance enter into religious controversy, but when once entered he did his best to make order and reason prevail there. His attitude is well stated in an early essay not since reprinted: —

"And you are masters in Israel, and know not these things; and you require a voice from the world of literature to tell them to you! Those who ask nothing better than to remain silent on such topics, who have to quit their own sphere to speak of them, who cannot touch them without being reminded that they survive those who touched them with far different power, you compel, in the mere interest of letters, of intelligence, of general culture, to proclaim truths which it was your function to have made familiar. And when you have thus forced the very stones to cry out, and the dumb to speak, you call them

singular because they know these truths, and arrogant because they declare them!" [1]

In political discussion as in all other forms of criticism Arnold aimed at disinterestedness. "I am a Liberal," he says in the Introduction to *Culture and Anarchy*, "yet I am a Liberal tempered by experience, reflection, and self-renouncement." In the last condition he believed that his particular strength lay. "I do not wish to see men of culture entrusted with power." In his coolness and freedom from bitterness is to be found his chief superiority to his more violent contemporaries. This saved him from magnifying the faults inseparable from the social movements of his day. In contrast with Carlyle he retains to the end a sympathy with the advance of democracy and a belief in the principles of liberty and equality, while not blinded to the weaknesses of Liberalism. Political discussion in the hands of its express partisans is always likely to become violent and one-sided. This violence and one-sidedness Arnold believes it the work of criticism to temper, or as he expresses it, in *Culture and Anarchy*, "Culture is the eternal opponent of the two things which are the signal marks of Jacobinism, — its fierceness and its addiction to an abstract system."

VII

"Un Milton jeune et voyageant" was George Sand's description of the young Arnold. The eager pursuit of high aims, implied in this description, he carried from youth into manhood and age. The innocence, the hopefulness, and the noble curiosity of youth he retained to the end. But these became tempered with the ripe wisdom of maturity, a wisdom needed for the helpful interpretation of a perplexing period. His prose writings are surpassed, in that spontaneous and unaccountable inspiration which we call genius, by those of certain of his contemporaries, but when we become exhausted by the perversities of ill-controlled passion and find ourselves unable to breathe the rarified air of transcendentalism, we may turn to him for the clarifying and strengthening effect of calm intelligence and pure spirituality.

Conclusion

[1] From *Dr. Stanley's Lectures on the Jewish Church*, *Macmillan's Magazine*, February, 1863, vol. 7, p. 336.

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SELECTIONS FROM MATTHEW ARNOLD

I. THEORIES OF LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

POETRY AND THE CLASSICS[1]

In two small volumes of Poems, published anonymously, one in 1849, the other in 1852, many of the Poems which compose the present volume have already appeared. The rest are now published for the first time.

I have, in the present collection, omitted the poem[2] from which the volume published in 1852 took its title. I have done so, not because the subject of it was a Sicilian Greek born between two and three thousand years ago, although many persons would think this a sufficient reason. Neither have I done so because I had, in my own opinion, failed in the delineation which I intended to effect. I intended to delineate the feelings of one of the last of the Greek religious philosophers, one of the family of Orpheus and Musæus, having survived his fellows, living on into a time when the habits of Greek thought and feeling had begun fast to change, character to dwindle, the influence of the Sophists[3] to prevail. Into the feelings of a man so situated there are entered much that we are accustomed to consider as exclusively modern; how much, the fragments of Empedocles himself which remain to us are sufficient at least to indicate. What those who

are familiar only with the great monuments of early Greek genius suppose to be its exclusive characteristics, have disappeared; the calm, the cheerfulness, the disinterested objectivity have disappeared; the dialogue of the mind with itself has commenced; modern problems have presented themselves; we hear already the doubts, we witness the discouragement, of Hamlet and of Faust.

The representation of such a man's feelings must be interesting, if consistently drawn. We all naturally take pleasure, says Aristotle,[1] in any imitation or representation whatever: this is the basis of our love of poetry: and we take pleasure in them, he adds, because all knowledge is naturally agreeable to us; not to the philosopher only, but to mankind at large. Every representation therefore which is consistently drawn may be supposed to be interesting, inasmuch as it gratifies this natural interest in knowledge of all kinds. What is *not* interesting, is that which does not add to our knowledge of any kind; that which is vaguely conceived and loosely drawn; a representation which is general, indeterminate, and faint, instead of being particular, precise, and firm.

Any accurate representation may therefore be expected to be interesting; but, if the representation be a poetical one, more than this is demanded. It is demanded, not only that it shall interest, but also that it shall inspirit and rejoice the reader: that it shall convey a charm, and infuse delight. For the Muses, as Hesiod[2] says, were born that they might be "a forgetfulness of evils, and a truce from cares": and it is not enough that the poet should add to the knowledge of men, it is required of him also that he should add to their happiness. "All art," says Schiller, "is dedicated to joy, and there is no higher and no more seri-

ous problem, than how to make men happy. The right art is that alone, which creates the highest enjoyment."

A poetical work, therefore, is not yet justified when it has been shown to be an accurate, and therefore interesting representation; it has to be shown also that it is a representation from which men can derive enjoyment. In presence of the most tragic circumstances, represented in a work of art, the feeling of enjoyment, as is well known, may still subsist: the representation of the most utter calamity, of the liveliest anguish, is not sufficient to destroy it: the more tragic the situation, the deeper becomes the enjoyment; and the situation is more tragic in proportion as it becomes more terrible.

What then are the situations, from the representation of which, though accurate, no poetical enjoyment can be derived? They are those in which the suffering finds no vent in action; in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done. In such situations there is inevitably something morbid, in the description of them something monotonous. When they occur in actual life, they are painful, not tragic; the representation of them in poetry is painful also.

To this class of situations, poetically faulty as it appears to me, that of Empedocles, as I have endeavored to represent him, belongs; and I have therefore excluded the poem from the present collection.

And why, it may be asked, have I entered into this explanation respecting a matter so unimportant as the admission or exclusion of the poem in question? I have done so, because I was anxious to avow that the sole reason for its exclusion was that which has been

stated above; and that it has not been excluded in deference to the opinion which many critics of the present day appear to entertain against subjects chosen from distant times and countries: against the choice, in short, of any subjects but modern ones.

"The poet," it is said,[1] and by an intelligent critic, "the poet who would really fix the public attention must leave the exhausted past, and draw his subjects from matters of present import, and *therefore* both of interest and novelty."

Now this view I believe to be completely false. It is worth examining, inasmuch as it is a fair sample of a class of critical dicta everywhere current at the present day, having a philosophical form and air, but no real basis in fact; and which are calculated to vitiate the judgment of readers of poetry, while they exert, so far as they are adopted, a misleading influence on the practice of those who make it.

What are the eternal objects of poetry, among all nations and at all times? They are actions; human actions; possessing an inherent interest in themselves, and which are to be communicated in an interesting manner by the art of the poet. Vainly will the latter imagine that he has everything in his own power; that he can make an intrinsically inferior action equally delightful with a more excellent one by his treatment of it: he may indeed compel us to admire his skill, but his work will possess, within itself, an incurable defect.

The poet, then, has in the first place to select an excellent action; and what actions are the most excellent? Those, certainly, which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections: to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and which are independent of time. These feel-

ings are permanent and the same; that which interests them is permanent and the same also. The modernness or antiquity of an action, therefore, has nothing to do with its fitness for poetical representation; this depends upon its inherent qualities. To the elementary part of our nature, to our passions, that which is great and passionate is eternally interesting; and interesting solely in proportion to its greatness and to its passion. A great human action of a thousand years ago is more interesting to it than a smaller human action of to-day, even though upon the representation of this last the most consummate skill may have been expended, and though it has the advantage of appealing by its modern language, familiar manners, and contemporary allusions, to all our transient feelings and interests. These, however, have no right to demand of a poetical work that it shall satisfy them; their claims are to be directed elsewhere. Poetical works belong to the domain of our permanent passions: let them interest these, and the voice of all subordinate claims upon them is at once silenced.

Achilles, Prometheus, Clytemnestra, Dido[1] — what modern poem presents personages as interesting, even to us moderns, as these personages of an "exhausted past"? We have the domestic epic dealing with the details of modern life, which pass daily under our eyes; we have poems representing modern personages in contact with the problems of modern life, moral, intellectual, and social; these works have been produced by poets the most distinguished of their nation and time; yet I fearlessly assert that *Hermann and Dorothea*, *Childe Harold*, *Jocelyn*, the *Excursion*,[2] leave the reader cold in comparison with the effect produced upon him by the latter books of the *Iliad*, by the *Oresteia*, or by the episode of Dido. And why is this?

Simply because in the three last-named cases the action is greater, the personages nobler, the situations more intense: and this is the true basis of the interest in a poetical work, and this alone.

It may be urged, however, that past actions may be interesting in themselves, but that they are not to be adopted by the modern poet, because it is impossible for him to have them clearly present to his own mind, and he cannot therefore feel them deeply, nor represent them forcibly. But this is not necessarily the case. The externals of a past action, indeed, he cannot know with the precision of a contemporary; but his business is with its essentials. The outward man of Œdipus[1] or of Macbeth, the houses in which they lived, the ceremonies of their courts, he cannot accurately figure to himself; but neither do they essentially concern him. His business is with their inward man; with their feelings and behavior in certain tragic situations, which engage their passions as men; these have in them nothing local and casual; they are as accessible to the modern poet as to a contemporary.

The date of an action, then, signifies nothing: the action itself, its selection and construction, this is what is all-important. This the Greeks understood far more clearly than we do. The radical difference between their poetical theory and ours consists, as it appears to me, in this: that, with them, the poetical character of the action in itself, and the conduct of it, was the first consideration; with us, attention is fixed mainly on the value of the separate thoughts and images which occur in the treatment of an action. They regarded the whole; we regard the parts. With them, the action predominated over the expression of it; with us, the expression predominates over the

action. Not that they failed in expression, or were inattentive to it; on the contrary, they are the highest models of expression, the unapproached masters of the *grand style:*[1] but their expression is so excellent because it is so admirably kept in its right degree of prominence; because it is so simple and so well subordinated; because it draws its force directly from the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys. For what reason was the Greek tragic poet confined to so limited a range of subjects? Because there are so few actions which unite in themselves, in the highest degree, the conditions of excellence; and it was not thought that on any but an excellent subject could an excellent poem be constructed. A few actions, therefore, eminently adapted for tragedy, maintained almost exclusive possession of the Greek tragic stage. Their significance appeared inexhaustible; they were as permanent problems, perpetually offered to the genius of every fresh poet. This too is the reason of what appears to us moderns a certain baldness of expression in Greek tragedy; of the triviality with which we often reproach the remarks of the chorus, where it takes part in the dialogue: that the action itself, the situation of Orestes, or Merope, or Alcmæon,[2] was to stand the central point of interest, unforgotten, absorbing, principal; that no accessories were for a moment to distract the spectator's attention from this, that the tone of the parts was to be perpetually kept down, in order not to impair the grandiose effect of the whole. The terrible old mythic story on which the drama was founded stood, before he entered the theatre, traced in its bare outlines upon the spectator's mind; it stood in his memory, as a group of statuary, faintly seen, at the end of a long and dark vista: then came the poet, embodying outlines, developing situations, not a word wasted,

not a sentiment capriciously thrown in: stroke upon stroke, the drama proceeded: the light deepened upon the group; more and more it revealed itself to the riveted gaze of the spectator: until at last, when the final words were spoken, it stood before him in broad sunlight, a model of immortal beauty.

This was what a Greek critic demanded; this was what a Greek poet endeavored to effect. It signified nothing to what time an action belonged. We do not find that the *Persæ* occupied a particularly high rank among the dramas of Æschylus because it represented a matter of contemporary interest: this was not what a cultivated Athenian required. He required that the permanent elements of his nature should be moved; and dramas of which the action, though taken from a long-distant mythic time, yet was calculated to accomplish this in a higher degree than that of the *Persæ*, stood higher in his estimation accordingly. The Greeks felt, no doubt, with their exquisite sagacity of taste, that an action of present times was too near them, too much mixed up with what was accidental and passing, to form a sufficiently grand, detached, and self-subsistent object for a tragic poem. Such objects belonged to the domain of the comic poet, and of the lighter kinds of poetry. For the more serious kinds, for *pragmatic* poetry, to use an excellent expression of Polybius,[1] they were more difficult and severe in the range of subjects which they permitted. Their theory and practice alike, the admirable treatise of Aristotle, and the unrivalled works of their poets, exclaim with a thousand tongues — "All depends upon the subject; choose a fitting action, penetrate yourself with the feeling of its situations; this done, everything else will follow."

But for all kinds of poetry alike there was one point

on which they were rigidly exacting; the adaptability of the subject to the kind of poetry selected, and the careful construction of the poem.

How different a way of thinking from this is ours! We can hardly at the present day understand what Menander[1] meant, when he told a man who enquired as to the progress of his comedy that he had finished it, not having yet written a single line, because he had constructed the action of it in his mind. A modern critic would have assured him that the merit of his piece depended on the brilliant things which arose under his pen as he went along. We have poems which seem to exist merely for the sake of single lines and passages; not for the sake of producing any total-impression. We have critics who seem to direct their attention merely to detached expressions, to the language about the action, not to the action itself. I verily think that the majority of them do not in their hearts believe that there is such a thing as a total-impression to be derived from a poem at all, or to be demanded from a poet; they think the term a commonplace of metaphysical criticism. They will permit the poet to select any action he pleases, and to suffer that action to go as it will, provided he gratifies them with occasional bursts of fine writing, and with a shower of isolated thoughts and images. That is, they permit him to leave their poetical sense ungratified, provided that he gratifies their rhetorical sense and their curiosity. Of his neglecting to gratify these, there is little danger; he needs rather to be warned against the danger of attempting to gratify these alone; he needs rather to be perpetually reminded to prefer his action to everything else; so to treat this, as to permit its inherent excellences to develop themselves, without interruption from the intrusion of his personal pecu-

liarities: most fortunate when he most entirely succeeds in effacing himself, and in enabling a noble action to subsist as it did in nature.

But the modern critic not only permits a false practice: he absolutely prescribes false aims. "A true allegory of the state of one's own mind in a representative history," the poet is told, "is perhaps the highest thing that one can attempt in the way of poetry." And accordingly he attempts it. An allegory of the state of one's own mind, the highest problem of an art which imitates actions! No assuredly, it is not, it never can be so: no great poetical work has ever been produced with such an aim. *Faust* itself, in which something of the kind is attempted, wonderful passages as it contains, and in spite of the unsurpassed beauty of the scenes which relate to Margaret, *Faust* itself, judged as a whole, and judged strictly as a poetical work, is defective: its illustrious author, the greatest poet of modern times, the greatest critic of all times, would have been the first to acknowledge it; he only defended his work, indeed, by asserting it to be "something incommensurable."

The confusion of the present times is great, the multitude of voices counselling different things bewildering, the number of existing works capable of attracting a young writer's attention and of becoming his models, immense: what he wants is a hand to guide him through the confusion, a voice to prescribe to him the aim which he should keep in view, and to explain to him that the value of the literary works which offer themselves to his attention is relative to their power of helping him forward on his road towards this aim. Such a guide the English writer at the present day will nowhere find. Failing this, all that can be looked for, all indeed that can be desired, is, that his atten-

tion should be fixed on excellent models; that he may reproduce, at any rate, something of their excellence, by penetrating himself with their works and by catching their spirit, if he cannot be taught to produce what is excellent independently.

Foremost among these models for the English writer stands Shakespeare: a name the greatest perhaps of all poetical names; a name never to be mentioned without reverence. I will venture, however, to express a doubt whether the influence of his works, excellent and fruitful for the readers of poetry, for the great majority, has been an unmixed advantage to the writers of it. Shakespeare indeed chose excellent subjects — the world could afford no better than *Macbeth*, or *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Othello:* he had no theory respecting the necessity of choosing subjects of present import, or the paramount interest attaching to allegories of the state of one's own mind; like all great poets, he knew well what constituted a poetical action; like them, wherever he found such an action, he took it; like them, too, he found his best in past times. But to these general characteristics of all great poets he added a special one of his own; a gift, namely, of happy, abundant, and ingenious expression, eminent and unrivalled: so eminent as irresistibly to strike the attention first in him and even to throw into comparative shade his other excellences as a poet. Here has been the mischief. These other excellences were his fundamental excellences *as a poet;* what distinguishes the artist from the mere amateur, says Goethe, is *Architectonicè* in the highest sense; that power of execution which creates, forms, and constitutes: not the profoundness of single thoughts, not the richness of imagery, not the abundance of illustration. But these attractive accessories of a poetical work being more easily seized than

the spirit of the whole, and these accessories being possessed by Shakespeare in an unequalled degree, a young writer having recourse to Shakespeare as his model runs great risk of being vanquished and absorbed by them, and, in consequence, of reproducing, according to the measure of his power, these, and these alone. Of this prepondering quality of Shakespeare's genius, accordingly, almost the whole of modern English poetry has, it appears to me, felt the influence. To the exclusive attention on the part of his imitators to this, it is in a great degree owing that of the majority of modern poetical works the details alone are valuable, the composition worthless. In reading them one is perpetually reminded of that terrible sentence on a modern French poet, — *il dit tout ce qu'il veut, mais malheureusement il n'a rien à dire.*[1]

Let me give an instance of what I mean. I will take it from the works of the very chief among those who seem to have been formed in the school of Shakespeare; of one whose exquisite genius and pathetic death render him forever interesting. I will take the poem of *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil*, by Keats. I choose this rather than the *Endymion*, because the latter work (which a modern critic has classed with the *Faery Queen!*), although undoubtedly there blows through it the breath of genius, is yet as a whole so utterly incoherent, as not strictly to merit the name of a poem at all. The poem of *Isabella*, then, is a perfect treasure-house of graceful and felicitous words and images: almost in every stanza there occurs one of those vivid and picturesque turns of expression, by which the object is made to flash upon the eye of the mind, and which thrill the reader with a sudden delight. This one short poem contains, perhaps, a greater number of happy single expressions which one could quote

than all the extant tragedies of Sophocles. But the action, the story? The action in itself is an excellent one; but so feebly is it conceived by the poet, so loosely constructed, that the effect produced by it, in and for itself, is absolutely null. Let the reader, after he has finished the poem of Keats, turn to the same story in the *Decameron*:[1] he will then feel how pregnant and interesting the same action has become in the hands of a great artist, who above all things delineates his object; who subordinates expression to that which it is designed to express.

I have said that the imitators of Shakespeare, fixing their attention on his wonderful gift of expression, have directed their imitation to this, neglecting his other excellences. These excellences, the fundamental excellences of poetical art, Shakespeare no doubt possessed them — possessed many of them in a splendid degree; but it may perhaps be doubted whether even he himself did not sometimes give scope to his faculty of expression to the prejudice of a higher poetical duty. For we must never forget that Shakespeare is the great poet he is from his skill in discerning and firmly conceiving an excellent action, from his power of intensely feeling a situation, of intimately associating himself with a character; not from his gift of expression, which rather even leads him astray, degenerating sometimes into a fondness for curiosity of expression, into an irritability of fancy, which seems to make it impossible for him to say a thing plainly, even when the press of the action demands the very directest language, or its level character the very simplest. Mr. Hallam,[2] than whom it is impossible to find a saner and more judicious critic, has had the courage (for at the present day it needs courage) to remark, how extremely and faultily difficult Shakespeare's language

often is. It is so: you may find main scenes in some of his greatest tragedies, *King Lear*, for instance, where the language is so artificial, so curiously tortured, and so difficult, that every speech has to be read two or three times before its meaning can be comprehended. This over-curiousness of expression is indeed but the excessive employment of a wonderful gift — of the power of saying a thing in a happier way than any other man; nevertheless, it is carried so far that one understands what M. Guizot[1] meant when he said that Shakespeare appears in his language to have tried all styles except that of simplicity. He has not the severe and scrupulous self-restraint of the ancients, partly, no doubt, because he had a far less cultivated and exacting audience. He has indeed a far wider range than they had, a far richer fertility of thought; in this respect he rises above them. In his strong conception of his subject, in the genuine way in which he is penetrated with it, he resembles them, and is unlike the moderns. But in the accurate limitation of it, the conscientious rejection of superfluities, the simple and rigorous development of it from the first line of his work to the last, he falls below them, and comes nearer to the moderns. In his chief works, besides what he has of his own, he has the elementary soundness of the ancients; he has their important action and their large and broad manner; but he has not their purity of method. He is therefore a less safe model; for what he has of his own is personal, and inseparable from his own rich nature; it may be imitated and exaggerated, it cannot be learned or applied as an art. He is above all suggestive; more valuable, therefore, to young writers as men than as artists. But clearness of arrangement, rigor of development, simplicity of style — these may to a certain extent be learned: and

these may, I am convinced, be learned best from the ancients, who, although infinitely less suggestive than Shakespeare, are thus, to the artist, more instructive.

What then, it will be asked, are the ancients to be our sole models? the ancients with their comparatively narrow range of experience, and their widely different circumstances? Not, certainly, that which is narrow in the ancients, nor that in which we can no longer sympathize. An action like the action of the *Antigone* of Sophocles, which turns upon the conflict between the heroine's duty to her brother's corpse and that to the laws of her country, is no longer one in which it is possible that we should feel a deep interest. I am speaking too, it will be remembered, not of the best sources of intellectual stimulus for the general reader, but of the best models of instruction for the individual writer. This last may certainly learn of the ancients, better than anywhere else, three things which it is vitally important for him to know: — the all-importance of the choice of a subject; the necessity of accurate construction; and the subordinate character of expression. He will learn from them how unspeakably superior is the effect of the one moral impression left by a great action treated as a whole, to the effect produced by the most striking single thought or by the happiest image. As he penetrates into the spirit of the great classical works, as he becomes gradually aware of their intense significance, their noble simplicity, and their calm pathos, he will be convinced that it is this effect, unity and profoundness of moral impression, at which the ancient poets aimed; that it is this which constitutes the grandeur of their works, and which makes them immortal. He will desire to direct his own efforts towards producing the same effect. Above all, he will deliver himself from the

jargon of modern criticism, and escape the danger of producing poetical works conceived in the spirit of the passing time, and which partake of its transitoriness.

The present age makes great claims upon us: we owe it service, it will not be satisfied without our admiration. I know not how it is, but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those who constantly practise it, a steadying and composing effect upon their judgment, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general. They are like persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience; they are more truly than others under the empire of facts, and more independent of the language current among those with whom they live. They wish neither to applaud nor to revile their age: they wish to know what it is, what it can give them, and whether this is what they want. What they want, they know very well; they want to educe and cultivate what is best and noblest in themselves: they know, too, that this is no easy task — χαλεπὸν as Pittacus[1] said, χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι — and they ask themselves sincerely whether their age and its literature can assist them in the attempt. If they are endeavoring to practise any art, they remember the plain and simple proceedings of the old artists, who attained their grand results by penetrating themselves with some noble and significant action, not by inflating themselves with a belief in the preëminent importance and greatness of their own times. They do not talk of their mission, nor of interpreting their age, nor of the coming poet; all this, they know, is the mere delirium of vanity; their business is not to praise their age, but to afford to the men who live in it the highest pleasure which they are capable of feeling. If asked to afford this by

means of subjects drawn from the age itself, they ask what special fitness the present age has for supplying them. They are told that it is an era of progress, an age commissioned to carry out the great ideas of industrial development and social amelioration. They reply that with all this they can do nothing; that the elements they need for the exercise of their art are great actions, calculated powerfully and delightfully to affect what is permanent in the human soul; that so far as the present age can supply such actions, they will gladly make use of them; but that an age wanting in moral grandeur can with difficulty supply such, and an age of spiritual discomfort with difficulty be powerfully and delightfully affected by them.

A host of voices will indignantly rejoin that the present age is inferior to the past neither in moral grandeur nor in spiritual health. He who possesses the discipline I speak of will content himself with remembering the judgments passed upon the present age, in this respect, by the men of strongest head and widest culture whom it has produced; by Goethe and by Niebuhr.[1] It will be sufficient for him that he knows the opinions held by these two great men respecting the present age and its literature; and that he feels assured in his own mind that their aims and demands upon life were such as he would wish, at any rate, his own to be; and their judgment as to what is impeding and disabling such as he may safely follow. He will not, however, maintain a hostile attitude towards the false pretensions of his age; he will content himself with not being overwhelmed by them. He will esteem himself fortunate if he can succeed in banishing from his mind all feelings of contradiction, and irritation, and impatience; in order to delight himself with the contemplation of some noble action of a heroic time, and to

enable others, through his representation of it, to delight in it also.

I am far indeed from making any claim, for myself, that I possess this discipline; or for the following poems, that they breathe its spirit. But I say, that in the sincere endeavor to learn and practise, amid the bewildering confusion of our times, what is sound and true in poetical art, I seemed to myself to find the only sure guidance, the only solid footing, among the ancients. They, at any rate, knew what they wanted in art, and we do not. It is this uncertainty which is disheartening, and not hostile criticism. How often have I felt this when reading words of disparagement or of cavil: that it is the uncertainty as to what is really to be aimed at which makes our difficulty, not the dissatisfaction of the critic, who himself suffers from the same uncertainty. *Non me tua fervida terrent Dicta; . . . Dii me terrent, et Jupiter hostis.*[1]

Two kinds of *dilettanti*, says Goethe, there are in poetry: he who neglects the indispensable mechanical part, and thinks he has done enough if he shows spirituality and feeling; and he who seeks to arrive at poetry merely by mechanism, in which he can acquire an artisan's readiness, and is without soul and matter. And he adds, that the first does most harm to art, and the last to himself. If we must be *dilettanti:* if it is impossible for us, under the circumstances amidst which we live, to think clearly, to feel nobly, and to delineate firmly: if we cannot attain to the mastery of the great artists — let us, at least, have so much respect for our art as to prefer it to ourselves. Let us not bewilder our successors: let us transmit to them the practice of poetry, with its boundaries and wholesome regulative laws, under which excellent works

may again, perhaps, at some future time, be produced, not yet fallen into oblivion through our neglect, not yet condemned and cancelled by the influence of their eternal enemy, caprice.

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM AT THE PRESENT TIME[1]

MANY objections have been made to a proposition which, in some remarks of mine[2] on translating Homer, I ventured to put forth; a proposition about criticism, and its importance at the present day. I said: "Of the literature of France and Germany, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a critical effort; the endeavor, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." I added, that owing to the operation in English literature of certain causes, "almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which now Europe most desires, — criticism"; and that the power and value of English literature was thereby impaired. More than one rejoinder declared that the importance I here assigned to criticism was excessive, and asserted the inherent superiority of the creative effort of the human spirit over its critical effort. And the other day, having been led by a Mr. Shairp's[3] excellent notice of Wordsworth[4] to turn again to his biography, I found, in the words of this great man, whom I, for one, must always listen to with the profoundest respect, a sentence passed on the critic's business, which seems to justify every possible disparagement of it. Wordsworth says in one of his letters[5]: —

"The writers in these publications" (the Reviews), "while they prosecute their inglorious employment, cannot be supposed to be in a state of mind very

favorable for being affected by the finer influences of a thing so pure as genuine poetry."

And a trustworthy reporter of his conversation quotes a more elaborate judgment to the same effect: —

"Wordsworth holds the critical power very low, infinitely lower than the inventive; and he said to-day that if the quantity of time consumed in writing critiques on the works of others were given to original composition, of whatever kind it might be, it would be much better employed; it would make a man find out sooner his own level, and it would do infinitely less mischief. A false or malicious criticism may do much injury to the minds of others, a stupid invention, either in prose or verse, is quite harmless."

It is almost too much to expect of poor human nature, that a man capable of producing some effect in one line of literature, should, for the greater good of society, voluntarily doom himself to impotence and obscurity in another. Still less is this to be expected from men addicted to the composition of the "false or malicious criticism" of which Wordsworth speaks. However, everybody would admit that a false or malicious criticism had better never have been written. Everybody, too, would be willing to admit, as a general proposition, that the critical faculty is lower than the inventive. But is it true that criticism is really, in itself, a baneful and injurious employment; is it true that all time given to writing critiques on the works of others would be much better employed if it were given to original composition, of whatever kind this may be? Is it true that Johnson had better have gone on producing more *Irenes*[1] instead of writing his *Lives of the Poets;* nay, is it certain that Wordsworth himself was better employed in making his Ecclesiastical Sonnets than when he made his cele-

brated Preface[1] so full of criticism, and criticism of the works of others? Wordsworth was himself a great critic, and it is to be sincerely regretted that he has not left us more criticism; Goethe was one of the greatest of critics, and we may sincerely congratulate ourselves that he has left us so much criticism. Without wasting time over the exaggeration which Wordsworth's judgment on criticism clearly contains, or over an attempt to trace the causes, — not difficult, I think, to be traced, — which may have led Wordsworth to this exaggeration, a critic may with advantage seize an occasion for trying his own conscience, and for asking himself of what real service at any given moment the practice of criticism either is or may be made to his own mind and spirit, and to the minds and spirits of others.

The critical power is of lower rank than the creative. True; but in assenting to this proposition, one or two things are to be kept in mind. It is undeniable that the exercise of a creative power, that a free creative activity, is the highest function of man; it is proved to be so by man's finding in it his true happiness. But it is undeniable, also, that men may have the sense of exercising this free creative activity in other ways than in producing great works of literature or art; if it were not so, all but a very few men would be shut out from the true happiness of all men. They may have it in well-doing, they may have it in learning, they may have it even in criticizing. This is one thing to be kept in mind. Another is, that the exercise of the creative power in the production of great works of literature or art, however high this exercise of it may rank, is not at all epochs and under all conditions possible; and that therefore labor may be vainly spent in attempting it, which

might with more fruit be used in preparing for it, in rendering it possible. This creative power works with elements, with materials; what if it has not those materials, those elements, ready for its use? In that case it must surely wait till they are ready. Now, in literature, — I will limit myself to literature, for it is about literature that the question arises, — the elements with which the creative power works are ideas; the best ideas on every matter which literature touches, current at the time. At any rate we may lay it down as certain that in modern literature no manifestation of the creative power not working with these can be very important or fruitful. And I say *current* at the time, not merely accessible at the time; for creative literary genius does not principally show itself in discovering new ideas: that is rather the business of the philosopher. The grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery; its gift lies in the faculty of being happily inspired by a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas, when it finds itself in them; of dealing divinely with these ideas, presenting them in the most effective and attractive combinations, — making beautiful works with them, in short. But it must have the atmosphere, it must find itself amidst the order of ideas, in order to work freely; and these it is not so easy to command. This is why great creative epochs in literature are so rare, this is why there is so much that is unsatisfactory in the productions of many men of real genius; because, for the creation of a master-work of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment; the creative power has, for its happy

exercise, appointed elements, and those elements are not in its own control.

Nay, they are more within the control of the critical power. It is the business of the critical power, as I said in the words already quoted, "in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." Thus it tends, at last, to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself. It tends to establish an order of ideas, if not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces; to make the best ideas prevail. Presently these new ideas reach society, the touch of truth is the touch of life, and there is a stir and growth everywhere; out of this stir and growth come the creative epochs of literature.

Or, to narrow our range, and quit these considerations of the general march of genius and of society, — considerations which are apt to become too abstract and impalpable, — every one can see that a poet, for instance, ought to know life and the world before dealing with them in poetry; and life and the world being in modern times very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it; else it must be a comparatively poor, barren, and short-lived affair. This is why Byron's poetry had so little endurance in it, and Goethe's so much; both Byron and Goethe had a great productive power, but Goethe's was nourished by a great critical effort providing the true materials for it, and Byron's was not; Goethe knew life and the world, the poet's necessary subjects, much more comprehensively and thoroughly than Byron. He knew a great deal more of them, and he knew them much more as they really are.

It has long seemed to me that the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it in fact something premature; and that from this cause its productions are doomed, most of them, in spite of the sanguine hopes which accompanied and do still accompany them, to prove hardly more lasting than the productions of far less splendid epochs. And this prematureness comes from its having proceeded without having its proper data, without sufficient materials to work with. In other words, the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough. This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so wanting in completeness and variety. Wordsworth cared little for books, and disparaged Goethe. I admire Wordsworth, as he is, so much that I cannot wish him different; and it is vain, no doubt, to imagine such a man different from what he is, to suppose that he *could* have been different. But surely the one thing wanting to make Wordsworth an even greater poet than he is, — his thought richer, and his influence of wider application, — was that he should have read more books, among them, no doubt, those of that Goethe whom he disparaged without reading him.

But to speak of books and reading may easily lead to a misunderstanding here. It was not really books and reading that lacked to our poetry at this epoch: Shelley had plenty of reading, Coleridge had immense reading. Pindar and Sophocles — as we all say so glibly, and often with so little discernment of the real import of what we are saying — had not many books; Shakespeare was no deep reader. True; but in the Greece of Pindar and Sophocles, in the England of

Shakespeare, the poet lived in a current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing to the creative power; society was, in the fullest measure, permeated by fresh thought, intelligent and alive. And this state of things is the true basis for the creative power's exercise, in this it finds its data, its materials, truly ready for its hand; all the books and reading in the world are only valuable as they are helps to this. Even when this does not actually exist, books and reading may enable a man to construct a kind of semblance of it in his own mind, a world of knowledge and intelligence in which he may live and work. This is by no means an equivalent to the artist for the nationally diffused life and thought of the epochs of Sophocles or Shakespeare; but, besides that it may be a means of preparation for such epochs, it does really constitute, if many share in it, a quickening and sustaining atmosphere of great value. Such an atmosphere the many-sided learning and the long and widely combined critical effort of Germany formed for Goethe, when he lived and worked. There was no national glow of life and thought there as in the Athens of Pericles or the England of Elizabeth. That was the poet's weakness. But there was a sort of equivalent for it in the complete culture and unfettered thinking of a large body of Germans. That was his strength. In the England of the first quarter of this century there was neither a national glow of life and thought, such as we had in the age of Elizabeth, nor yet a culture and a force of learning and criticism such as were to be found in Germany. Therefore the creative power of poetry wanted, for success in the highest sense, materials and a basis; a thorough interpretation of the world was necessarily denied to it.

At first sight it seems strange that out of the immense

stir of the French Revolution and its age should not have come a crop of works of genius equal to that which came out of the stir of the great productive time of Greece, or out of that of the Renascence, with its powerful episode the Reformation. But the truth is that the stir of the French Revolution took a character which essentially distinguished it from such movements as these. These were, in the main, disinterestedly intellectual and spiritual movements; movements in which the human spirit looked for its satisfaction in itself and in the increased play of its own activity. The French Revolution took a political, practical character. The movement, which went on in France under the old régime, from 1700 to 1789, was far more really akin than that of the Revolution itself to the movement of the Renascence; the France of Voltaire and Rousseau told far more powerfully upon the mind of Europe than the France of the Revolution. Goethe reproached this last expressly with having "thrown quiet culture back." Nay, and the true key to how much in our Byron, even in our Wordsworth, is this! — that they had their source in a great movement of feeling, not in a great movement of mind. The French Revolution, however, — that object of so much blind love and so much blind hatred, — found undoubtedly its motive-power in the intelligence of men, and not in their practical sense; this is what distinguishes it from the English Revolution of Charles the First's time. This is what makes it a more spiritual event than our Revolution, an event of much more powerful and world-wide interest, though practically less successful; it appeals to an order of ideas which are universal, certain, permanent. 1789 asked of a thing, Is it rational? 1642 asked of a thing, Is it legal? or, when it went furthest, Is it according to conscienc

is the English fashion, a fashion to be treated, within its own sphere, with the highest respect; for its success, within its own sphere, has been prodigious. But what is law in one place is not law in another; what is law here to-day is not law even here to-morrow; and as for conscience, what is binding on one man's conscience is not binding on another's. The old woman[1] who threw her stool at the head of the surpliced minister in St. Giles's Church at Edinburgh obeyed an impulse to which millions of the human race may be permitted to remain strangers. But the prescriptions of reason are absolute, unchanging, of universal validity; *to count by tens is the easiest way of counting* — that is a proposition of which every one, from here to the Antipodes, feels the force; at least I should say so if we did not live in a country where it is not impossible that any morning we may find a letter in the *Times* declaring that a decimal coinage is an absurdity. That a whole nation should have been penetrated with an enthusiasm for pure reason, and with an ardent zeal for making its prescriptions triumph, is a very remarkable thing, when we consider how little of mind, or anything so worthy and quickening as mind, comes into the motives which alone, in general, impel great masses of men. In spite of the extravagant direction given to this enthusiasm, in spite of the crimes and follies in which it lost itself, the French Revolution derives from the force, truth, and universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas, a unique and still living power; it is, — it will probably long remain, — the greatest, the most animating event in history. And as no sincere passion for the things of the mind, even though it turn out in many respects an unfortunate passion, is ever quite thrown

away and quite barren of good, France has reaped from hers one fruit — the natural and legitimate fruit though not precisely the grand fruit she expected: she is the country in Europe where *the people* is most alive.

But the mania for giving an immediate political and practical application to all these fine ideas of the reason was fatal. Here an Englishman is in his element: on this theme we can all go on for hours. And all we are in the habit of saying on it has undoubtedly a great deal of truth. Ideas cannot be too much prized in and for themselves, cannot be too much lived with; but to transport them abruptly into the world of politics and practice, violently to revolutionize this world to their bidding, — that is quite another thing. There is the world of ideas and there is the world of practice; the French are often for suppressing the one and the English the other; but neither is to be suppressed. A member of the House of Commons said to me the other day: "That a thing is an anomaly, I consider to be no objection to it whatever." I venture to think he was wrong; that a thing is an anomaly *is* an objection to it, but absolutely and in the sphere of ideas: it is not necessarily, under such and such circumstances, or at such and such a moment, an objection to it in the sphere of politics and practice. Joubert has said beautifully: "C'est la force et le droit qui règlent toutes choses dans le monde; la force en attendant le droit."[1] (Force and right are the governors of this world; force till right is ready.) *Force till right is ready;* and till right is ready, force, the existing order of things, is justified, is the legitimate ruler. But right is something moral, and implies inward recognition, free assent of the will; we are not ready for right, — *right*, so far as we are concerned, *is not ready*, — until we have attained

this sense of seeing it and willing it. The way in which for us it may change and transform force, the existing order of things, and become, in its turn, the legitimate ruler of the world, should depend on the way in which, when our time comes, we see it and will it. Therefore for other people enamored of their own newly discerned right, to attempt to impose it upon us as ours, and violently to substitute their right for our force, is an act of tyranny, and to be resisted. It sets at naught the second great half of our maxim, *force till right is ready*. This was the grand error of the French Revolution; and its movement of ideas, by quitting the intellectual sphere and rushing furiously into the political sphere, ran, indeed, a prodigious and memorable course, but produced no such intellectual fruit as the movement of ideas of the Renascence, and created, in opposition to itself, what I may call an *epoch of concentration*. The great force of that epoch of concentration was England; and the great voice of that epoch of concentration was Burke. It is the fashion to treat Burke's writings on the French Revolution [1] as superannuated and conquered by the event; as the eloquent but unphilosophical tirades of bigotry and prejudice. I will not deny that they are often disfigured by the violence and passion of the moment, and that in some directions Burke's view was bounded, and his observation therefore at fault. But on the whole, and for those who can make the needful corrections, what distinguishes these writings is their profound, permanent, fruitful, philosophical truth. They contain the true philosophy of an epoch of concentration, dissipate the heavy atmosphere which its own nature is apt to engender round it, and make its resistance rational instead of mechanical.

But Burke is so great because, almost alone in England, he brings thought to bear upon politics, he saturates politics with thought. It is his accident that his ideas were at the service of an epoch of concentration, not of an epoch of expansion; it is his characteristic that he so lived by ideas, and had such a source of them welling up within him, that he could float even an epoch of concentration and English Tory politics with them. It does not hurt him that Dr. Price[1] and the Liberals were enraged with him; it does not even hurt him that George the Third and the Tories were enchanted with him. His greatness is that he lived in a world which neither English Liberalism nor English Toryism is apt to enter; — the world of ideas, not the world of catchwords and party habits. So far is it from being really true of him that he "to party gave up what was meant for mankind,"[2] that at the very end of his fierce struggle with the French Revolution, after all his invectives against its false pretensions, hollowness, and madness, with his sincere convictions of its mischievousness, he can close a memorandum on the best means of combating it, some of the last pages he ever wrote, — the *Thoughts on French Affairs*, in December 1791, — with these striking words: —

"The evil is stated, in my opinion, as it exists. The remedy must be where power, wisdom, and information, I hope, are more united with good intentions than they can be with me. I have done with this subject, I believe, forever. It has given me many anxious moments for the last two years. *If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope will forward it; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty*

current in human affairs, will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself, than the mere designs of men. They will not be resolute and firm, but perverse and obstinate."

That return of Burke upon himself has always seemed to me one of the finest things in English literature, or indeed in any literature. That is what I call living by ideas: when one side of a question has long had your earnest support, when all your feelings are engaged, when you hear all round you no language but one, when your party talks this language like a steam-engine and can imagine no other, — still to be able to think, still to be irresistibly carried, if so it be, by the current of thought to the opposite side of the question, and, like Balaam,[1] to be unable to speak anything *but what the Lord has put in your mouth.* I know nothing more striking, and I must add that I know nothing more un-English.

For the Englishman in general is like my friend the Member of Parliament, and believes, point-blank, that for a thing to be an anomaly is absolutely no objection to it whatever. He is like the Lord Auckland[2] of Burke's day, who, in a memorandum on the French Revolution, talks of "certain miscreants, assuming the name of philosophers, who have presumed themselves capable of establishing a new system of society." The Englishman has been called a political animal, and he values what is political and practical so much that ideas easily become objects of dislike in his eyes, and thinkers "miscreants," because ideas and thinkers have rashly meddled with politics and practice. This would be all very well if the dislike and neglect confined themselves to ideas transported out of their own sphere, and meddling rashly with practice; but they are inevitably extended to ideas as such, and to the whole

life of intelligence; practice is everything, a free play of the mind is nothing. The notion of the free play of the mind upon all subjects being a pleasure in itself, being an object of desire, being an essential provider of elements without which a nation's spirit, whatever compensations it may have for them, must, in the long run, die of inanition, hardly enters into an Englishman's thoughts. It is noticeable that the word *curiosity*, which in other languages is used in a good sense, to mean, as a high and fine quality of man's nature, just this disinterested love of a free play of the mind on all subjects, for its own sake, — it is noticeable, I say, that this word has in our language no sense of the kind, no sense but a rather bad and disparaging one. But criticism, real criticism, is essentially the exercise of this very quality. It obeys an instinct prompting it to try to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind; and to value knowledge and thought as they approach this best, without the intrusion of any other considerations whatever. This is an instinct for which there is, I think, little original sympathy in the practical English nature, and what there was of it has undergone a long benumbing period of blight and suppression in the epoch of concentration which followed the French Revolution.

But epochs of concentration cannot well endure forever; epochs of expansion, in the due course of things, follow them. Such an epoch of expansion seems to be opening in this country. In the first place all danger of a hostile forcible pressure of foreign ideas upon our practice has long disappeared; like the traveller in the fable, therefore, we begin to wear our cloak a little more loosely. Then, with a long peace, the ideas of Europe steal gradually and amicably in, and mingle,

though in infinitesimally small quantities at a time, with our own notions. Then, too, in spite of all that is said about the absorbing and brutalizing influence of our passionate material progress, it seems to me indisputable that this progress is likely, though not certain, to lead in the end to an apparition of intellectual life; and that man, after he has made himself perfectly comfortable and has now to determine what to do with himself next, may begin to remember that he has a mind, and that the mind may be made the source of great pleasure. I grant it is mainly the privilege of faith, at present, to discern this end to our railways, our business, and our fortune-making; but we shall see if, here as elsewhere, faith is not in the end the true prophet. Our ease, our travelling, and our unbounded liberty to hold just as hard and securely as we please to the practice to which our notions have given birth, all tend to beget an inclination to deal a little more freely with these notions themselves, to canvass them a little, to penetrate a little into their real nature. Flutterings of curiosity, in the foreign sense of the word, appear amongst us, and it is in these that criticism must look to find its account. Criticism first; a time of true creative activity, perhaps, — which, as I have said, must inevitably be preceded amongst us by a time of criticism, — hereafter, when criticism has done its work.

It is of the last importance that English criticism should clearly discern what rule for its course, in order to avail itself of the field now opening to it, and to produce fruit for the future, it ought to take. The rule may be summed up in one word, — *disinterestedness*. And how is criticism to show disinterestedness? By keeping aloof from what is called "the practical view of things"; by resolutely following the law of

its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches. By steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas, which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them. Else criticism, besides being really false to its own nature, merely continues in the old rut which it has hitherto followed in this country, and will certainly miss the chance now given to it. For what is at present the bane of criticism in this country? It is that practical considerations cling to it and stifle it. It subserves interests not its own. Our organs of criticism are organs of men and parties having practical ends to serve, and with them those practical ends are the first thing and the play of mind the second; so much play of mind as is compatible with the prosecution of those practical ends is all that is wanted. An organ like the *Revue des Deux Mondes*,[1] having for its main function to understand and utter the best that is known and thought in the world, existing, it may be said, as just an organ for a free play of the mind, we have not. But we have the *Edinburgh Review*, existing as an organ of the old Whigs, and for as much play of the mind as may suit its being that; we have

the *Quarterly Review*, existing as an organ of the Tories, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *British Quarterly Review*, existing as an organ of the political Dissenters, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *Times*, existing as an organ of the common, satisfied, well-to-do Englishman, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that. And so on through all the various fractions, political and religious, of our society; every fraction has, as such, its organ of criticism, but the notion of combining all fractions in the common pleasure of a free disinterested play of mind meets with no favor. Directly this play of mind wants to have more scope, and to forget the pressure of practical considerations a little, it is checked, it is made to feel the chain. We saw this the other day in the extinction, so much to be regretted, of the *Home and Foreign Review*.[1] Perhaps in no organ of criticism in this country was there so much knowledge, so much play of mind; but these could not save it. The *Dublin Review* subordinates play of mind to the practical business of English and Irish Catholicism, and lives. It must needs be that men should act in sects and parties, that each of these sects and parties should have its organ, and should make this organ subserve the interests of its action; but it would be well, too, that there should be a criticism, not the minister of these interests, not their enemy, but absolutely and entirely independent of them. No other criticism will ever attain any real authority or make any real way towards its end, — the creating a current of true and fresh ideas.

It is because criticism has so little kept in the pure intellectual sphere, has so little detached itself from practice, has been so directly polemical and contro-

versial, that it has so ill accomplished, in this country, its best spiritual work; which is to keep man from a self-satisfaction which is retarding and vulgarizing, to lead him towards perfection, by making his mind dwell upon what is excellent in itself, and the absolute beauty and fitness of things. A polemical practical criticism makes men blind even to the ideal imperfection of their practice, makes them willingly assert its ideal perfection, in order the better to secure it against attack: and clearly this is narrowing and baneful for them. If they were reassured on the practical side, speculative considerations of ideal perfection they might be brought to entertain, and their spiritual horizon would thus gradually widen. Sir Charles Adderley[1] says to the Warwickshire farmers:—

"Talk of the improvement of breed! Why, the race we ourselves represent, the men and women, the old Anglo-Saxon race, are the best breed in the whole world. . . . The absence of a too enervating climate, too unclouded skies, and a too luxurious nature, has produced so vigorous a race of people, and has rendered us so superior to all the world."

Mr. Roebuck[2] says to the Sheffield cutlers:—

"I look around me and ask what is the state of England? Is not property safe? Is not every man able to say what he likes? Can you not walk from one end of England to the other in perfect security? I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it? Nothing. I pray that our unrivalled happiness may last."

Now obviously there is a peril for poor human nature in words and thoughts of such exuberant self-satisfaction, until we find ourselves safe in the streets of the Celestial City.

"Das wenige verschwindet leicht dem Blicke
Der vorwärts sieht, wie viel noch übrig bleibt —"[1]

says Goethe; "the little that is done seems nothing when we look forward and see how much we have yet to do." Clearly this is a better line of reflection for weak humanity, so long as it remains on this earthly field of labor and trial.

But neither Sir Charles Adderley nor Mr. Roebuck is by nature inaccessible to considerations of this sort. They only lose sight of them owing to the controversial life we all lead, and the practical form which all speculation takes with us. They have in view opponents whose aim is not ideal, but practical; and in their zeal to uphold their own practice against these innovators, they go so far as even to attribute to this practice an ideal perfection. Somebody has been wanting to introduce a six-pound franchise, or to abolish church-rates, or to collect agricultural statistics by force, or to diminish local self-government. How natural, in reply to such proposals, very likely improper or ill-timed, to go a little beyond the mark and to say stoutly, "Such a race of people as we stand, so superior to all the world! The old Anglo-Saxon race, the best breed in the whole world! I pray that our unrivalled happiness may last! I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it?" And so long as criticism answers this dithyramb by insisting that the old Anglo-Saxon race would be still more superior to all others if it had no church-rates, or that our unrivalled happiness would last yet longer with a six-pound franchise, so long will the strain, "The best breed in the whole world!" swell louder and louder, everything ideal and refining will be lost out of sight, and both the assailed and their critics will remain in a sphere, to say the truth, per-

fectly unvital, a sphere in which spiritual progression is impossible. But let criticism leave church-rates and the franchise alone, and in the most candid spirit, without a single lurking thought of practical innovation, confront with our dithyramb this paragraph on which I stumbled in a newspaper immediately after reading Mr. Roebuck: —

"A shocking child murder has just been committed at Nottingham. A girl named Wragg left the workhouse there on Saturday morning with her young illegitimate child. The child was soon afterwards found dead on Mapperly Hills, having been strangled. Wragg is in custody."

Nothing but that; but, in juxtaposition with the absolute eulogies of Sir Charles Adderley and Mr. Roebuck, how eloquent, how suggestive are those few lines! "Our old Anglo-Saxon breed, the best in the whole world!" — how much that is harsh and ill-favored there is in this best! *Wragg!* If we are to talk of ideal perfection, of "the best in the whole world," has any one reflected what a touch of grossness in our race, what an original short-coming in the more delicate spiritual perceptions, is shown by the natural growth amongst us of such hideous names, — Higginbottom, Stiggins, Bugg! In Ionia and Attica they were luckier in this respect than "the best race in the world"; by the Ilissus there was no Wragg, poor thing! And "our unrivalled happiness"; — what an element of grimness, bareness, and hideousness mixes with it and blurs it; the workhouse, the dismal Mapperly Hills, — how dismal those who have seen them will remember; — the gloom, the smoke, the cold, the strangled illegitimate child! "I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it?" Perhaps not, one is inclined to answer; but

at any rate, in that case, the world is very much to be pitied. And the final touch, — short, bleak and inhuman: *Wragg is in custody.* The sex lost in the confusion of our unrivalled happiness; or (shall I say?) the superfluous Christian name lopped off by the straightforward vigor of our old Anglo-Saxon breed! There is profit for the spirit in such contrasts as this; criticism serves the cause of perfection by establishing them. By eluding sterile conflict, by refusing to remain in the sphere where alone narrow and relative conceptions have any worth and validity, criticism may diminish its momentary importance, but only in this way has it a chance of gaining admittance for those wider and more perfect conceptions to which all its duty is really owed. Mr. Roebuck will have a poor opinion of an adversary who replies to his defiant songs of triumph only by murmuring under his breath, *Wragg is in custody;* but in no other way will these songs of triumph be induced gradually to moderate themselves, to get rid of what in them is excessive and offensive, and to fall into a softer and truer key.

It will be said that it is a very subtle and indirect action which I am thus prescribing for criticism, and that, by embracing in this manner the Indian virtue of detachment [1] and abandoning the sphere of practical life, it condemns itself to a slow and obscure work. Slow and obscure it may be, but it is the only proper work of criticism. The mass of mankind will never have any ardent zeal for seeing things as they are; very inadequate ideas will always satisfy them. On these inadequate ideas reposes, and must repose, the general practice of the world. That is as much as saying that whoever sets himself to see things as they are will find himself one of a very small circle; but it is only by this small circle resolutely doing its own work

that adequate ideas will ever get current at all. The rush and roar of practical life will always have a dizzying and attracting effect upon the most collected spectator, and tend to draw him into its vortex; most of all will this be the case where that life is so powerful as it is in England. But it is only by remaining collected, and refusing to lend himself to the point of view of the practical man, that the critic can do the practical man any service; and it is only by the greatest sincerity in pursuing his own course, and by at last convincing even the practical man of his sincerity, that he can escape misunderstandings which perpetually threaten him.

For the practical man is not apt for fine distinctions, and yet in these distinctions truth and the highest culture greatly find their account. But it is not easy to lead a practical man, — unless you reassure him as to your practical intentions, you have no chance of leading him, — to see that a thing which he has always been used to look at from one side only, which he greatly values, and which, looked at from that side, quite deserves, perhaps, all the prizing and admiring which he bestows upon it, — that this thing, looked at from another side, may appear much less beneficent and beautiful, and yet retain all its claims to our practical allegiance. Where shall we find language innocent enough, how shall we make the spotless purity of our intentions evident enough, to enable us to say to the political Englishmen that the British Constitution itself, which, seen from the practical side, looks such a magnificent organ of progress and virtue, seen from the speculative side, — with its compromises, its love of facts, its horror of theory, its studied avoidance of clear thoughts, — that, seen from this side, our august Constitution sometimes looks, — forgive me, shade of

Lord Somers![1] — a colossal machine for the manufacture of Philistines? How is Cobbett[2] to say this and not be misunderstood, blackened as he is with the smoke of a lifelong conflict in the field of political practice? how is Mr. Carlyle to say it and not be misunderstood, after his furious raid into this field with his *Latter-day Pamphlets?*[3] how is Mr. Ruskin,[4] after his pugnacious political economy? I say, the critic must keep out of the region of immediate practice in the political, social, humanitarian sphere, if he wants to make a beginning for that more free speculative treatment of things, which may perhaps one day make its benefits felt even in this sphere, but in a natural and thence irresistible manner.

Do what he will, however, the critic will still remain exposed to frequent misunderstandings, and nowhere so much as in this country. For here people are particularly indisposed even to comprehend that without this free disinterested treatment of things, truth and the highest culture are out of the question. So immersed are they in practical life, so accustomed to take all their notions from this life and its processes, that they are apt to think that truth and culture themselves can be reached by the processes of this life, and that it is an impertinent singularity to think of reaching them in any other. "We are all *terræ filii*,"[5] cries their eloquent advocate; "all Philistines[6] together. Away with the notion of proceeding by any other course than the course dear to the Philistines; let us have a social movement, let us organize and combine a party to pursue truth and new thought, let us call it *the liberal party*, and let us all stick to each other, and back each other up. Let us have no nonsense about independent criticism, and intellectual delicacy, and the few and the many. Don't let us trouble

ourselves about foreign thought; we shall invent the whole thing for ourselves as we go along. If one of us speaks well, applaud him; if one of us speaks ill, applaud him too; we are all in the same movement, we are all liberals, we are all in pursuit of truth." In this way the pursuit of truth becomes really a social, practical, pleasurable affair, almost requiring a chairman, a secretary, and advertisements; with the excitement of an occasional scandal, with a little resistance to give the happy sense of difficulty overcome; but, in general, plenty of bustle and very little thought. To act is so easy, as Goethe says; to think is so hard![1] It is true that the critic has many temptations to go with the stream, to make one of the party movement, one of these *terræ filii;* it seems ungracious to refuse to be a *terræ filius*, when so many excellent people are; but the critic's duty is to refuse, or, if resistance is vain, at least to cry with Obermann: *Périssons en résistant.*[2]

How serious a matter it is to try and resist, I had ample opportunity of experiencing when I ventured some time ago to criticize the celebrated first volume of Bishop Colenso.[3] The echoes of the storm which was then raised I still, from time to time, hear grumbling round me. That storm arose out of a misunderstanding almost inevitable. It is a result of no little culture to attain to a clear perception that science and religion are two wholly different things. The multitude will forever confuse them; but happily that is of no great real importance, for while the multitude imagines itself to live by its false science, it does really live by its true religion. Dr. Colenso, however, in his first volume did all he could to strengthen the confusion,[4] and to make it dangerous. He did this with the best intentions, I freely admit, and with the most can-

did ignorance that this was the natural effect of what he was doing; but, says Joubert, "Ignorance, which in matters of morals extenuates the crime, is itself, in intellectual matters, a crime of the first order."[1] I criticized Bishop Colenso's speculative confusion. Immediately there was a cry raised: "What is this? here is a liberal attacking a liberal. Do not you belong to the movement? are not you a friend of truth? Is not Bishop Colenso in pursuit of truth? then speak with proper respect of his book. Dr. Stanley[2] is another friend of truth, and you speak with proper respect of his book; why make these invidious differences? both books are excellent, admirable, liberal; Bishop Colenso's perhaps the most so, because it is the boldest, and will have the best practical consequences for the liberal cause. Do you want to encourage to the attack of a brother liberal his, and your, and our implacable enemies, the *Church and State Review* or the *Record*, — the High Church rhinoceros and the Evangelical hyena? Be silent, therefore; or rather speak, speak as loud as ever you can! and go into ecstasies over the eighty and odd pigeons."

But criticism cannot follow this coarse and indiscriminate method. It is unfortunately possible for a man in pursuit of truth to write a book which reposes upon a false conception. Even the practical consequences of a book are to genuine criticism no recommendation of it, if the book is, in the highest sense, blundering. I see that a lady[3] who herself, too, is in pursuit of truth, and who writes with great ability, but a little too much, perhaps, under the influence of the practical spirit of the English liberal movement, classes Bishop Colenso's book and M. Renan's[4] together, in her survey of the religious state of Europe, as facts of the same order, works, both of them, of

"great importance"; "great ability, power, and skill"; Bishop Colenso's, perhaps, the most powerful; at least, Miss Cobbe gives special expression to her gratitude that to Bishop Colenso "has been given the strength to grasp, and the courage to teach, truths of such deep import." In the same way, more than one popular writer has compared him to Luther. Now it is just this kind of false estimate which the critical spirit is, it seems to me, bound to resist. It is really the strongest possible proof of the low ebb at which, in England, the critical spirit is, that while the critical hit in the religious literature of Germany is Dr. Strauss's[1] book, in that of France M. Renan's book, the book of Bishop Colenso is the critical hit in the religious literature of England. Bishop Colenso's book reposes on a total misconception of the essential elements of the religious problem, as that problem is now presented for solution. To criticism, therefore, which seeks to have the best that is known and thought on this problem, it is, however well meant, of no importance whatever. M. Renan's book attempts a new synthesis of the elements furnished to us by the Four Gospels. It attempts, in my opinion, a synthesis, perhaps premature, perhaps impossible, certainly not successful. Up to the present time, at any rate, we must acquiesce in Fleury's sentence on such recastings of the Gospel story: *Quiconque s'imagine la pouvoir mieux écrire, ne l'entend pas.*[2] M. Renan had himself passed by anticipation a like sentence on his own work, when he said: "If a new presentation of the character of Jesus were offered to me, I would not have it; its very clearness would be, in my opinion, the best proof of its insufficiency." His friends may with perfect justice rejoin that at the sight of the Holy Land, and of the actual scene of the Gospel story, all the current of M. Renan's thoughts

may have naturally changed, and a new casting of that story irresistibly suggested itself to him; and that this is just a case for applying Cicero's maxim: Change of mind is not inconsistency — *nemo doctus unquam mutationem consilii inconstantiam dixit esse.*[1] Nevertheless, for criticism, M. Renan's first thought must still be the truer one, as long as his new casting so fails more fully to commend itself, more fully (to use Coleridge's happy phrase[2] about the Bible) to *find* us. Still M. Renan's attempt is, for criticism, of the most real interest and importance, since, with all its difficulty, a fresh synthesis of the New Testament *data* — not a making war on them, in Voltaire's fashion, not a leaving them out of mind, in the world's fashion, but the putting a new construction upon them, the taking them from under the old, traditional, conventional point of view and placing them under a new one — is the very essence of the religious problem, as now presented; and only by efforts in this direction can it receive a solution.

Again, in the same spirit in which she judges Bishop Colenso, Miss Cobbe, like so many earnest liberals of our practical race, both here and in America, herself sets vigorously about a positive reconstruction of religion, about making a religion of the future out of hand, or at least setting about making it. We must not rest, she and they are always thinking and saying, in negative criticism, we must be creative and constructive; hence we have such works as her recent *Religious Duty*, and works still more considerable, perhaps, by others, which will be in every one's mind. These works often have much ability; they often spring out of sincere convictions, and a sincere wish to do good; and they sometimes, perhaps, do good. Their fault is (if I may be permitted to say so) one

which they have in common with the British College of Health, in the New Road. Every one knows the British College of Health; it is that building with the lion and the statue of the Goddess Hygeia before it; at least I am sure about the lion, though I am not absolutely certain about the Goddess Hygeia. This building does credit, perhaps, to the resources of Dr. Morrison and his disciples; but it falls a good deal short of one's idea of what a British College of Health ought to be. In England, where we hate public interference and love individual enterprise, we have a whole crop of places like the British College of Health; the grand name without the grand thing. Unluckily, creditable to individual enterprise as they are, they tend to impair our taste by making us forget what more grandiose, noble, or beautiful character properly belongs to a public institution. The same may be said of the religions of the future of Miss Cobbe and others. Creditable, like the British College of Health, to the resources of their authors, they yet tend to make us forget what more grandiose, noble, or beautiful character properly belongs to religious constructions. The historic religions, with all their faults, have had this; it certainly belongs to the religious sentiment, when it truly flowers, to have this; and we impoverish our spirit if we allow a religion of the future without it. What then is the duty of criticism here? To take the practical point of view, to applaud the liberal movement and all its works, — its New Road religions of the future into the bargain, — for their general utility's sake? By no means; but to be perpetually dissatisfied with these works, while they perpetually fall short of a high and perfect ideal.

For criticism, these are elementary laws; but they never can be popular, and in this country they have

been very little followed, and one meets with immense obstacles in following them. That is a reason for asserting them again and again. Criticism must maintain its independence of the practical spirit and its aims. Even with well-meant efforts of the practical spirit it must express dissatisfaction, if in the sphere of the ideal they seem impoverishing and limiting. It must not hurry on to the goal because of its practical importance. It must be patient, and know how to wait; and flexible, and know how to attach itself to things and how to withdraw from them. It must be apt to study and praise elements that for the fulness of spiritual perfection are wanted, even though they belong to a power which in the practical sphere may be maleficent. It must be apt to discern the spiritual shortcomings or illusions of powers that in the practical sphere may be beneficent. And this without any notion of favoring or injuring, in the practical sphere, one power or the other; without any notion of playing off, in this sphere, one power against the other. When one looks, for instance, at the English Divorce Court — an institution which perhaps has its practical conveniences, but which in the ideal sphere is so hideous; an institution which neither makes divorce impossible nor makes it decent, which allows a man to get rid of his wife, or a wife of her husband, but makes them drag one another first, for the public edification, through a mire of unutterable infamy, — when one looks at this charming institution, I say, with its crowded trials, its newspaper reports, and its money compensations, this institution in which the gross unregenerate British Philistine has indeed stamped an image of himself, — one may be permitted to find the marriage theory of Catholicism refreshing and elevating. Or when Protestantism, in virtue of its

supposed rational and intellectual origin, gives the law to criticism too magisterially, criticism may and must remind it that its pretensions, in this respect, are illusive and do it harm; that the Reformation was a moral rather than an intellectual event; that Luther's theory of grace [1] no more exactly reflects the mind of the spirit than Bossuet's philosophy of history [2] reflects it; and that there is no more antecedent probability of the Bishop of Durham's stock of ideas being agreeable to perfect reason than of Pope Pius the Ninth's. But criticism will not on that account forget the achievements of Protestantism in the practical and moral sphere; nor that, even in the intellectual sphere, Protestantism, though in a blind and stumbling manner, carried forward the Renascence, while Catholicism threw itself violently across its path.

I lately heard a man of thought and energy contrasting the want of ardor and movement which he now found amongst young men in this country with what he remembered in his own youth, twenty years ago. "What reformers we were then!" he exclaimed; "What a zeal we had! how we canvassed every institution in Church and State, and were prepared to remodel them all on first principles!" He was inclined to regret, as a spiritual flagging, the lull which he saw. I am disposed rather to regard it as a pause in which the turn to a new mode of spiritual progress is being accomplished. Everything was long seen, by the young and ardent amongst us, in inseparable connection with politics and practical life. We have pretty well exhausted the benefits of seeing things in this connection, we have got all that can be got by so seeing them. Let us try a more disinterested mode of seeing them; let us betake ourselves more to the serener life of the mind and spirit. This life, too, may have

its excesses and dangers; but they are not for us at present. Let us think of quietly enlarging our stock of true and fresh ideas, and not, as soon as we get an idea or half an idea, be running out with it into the street, and trying to make it rule there. Our ideas will, in the end, shape the world all the better for maturing a little. Perhaps in fifty years' time it will in the English House of Commons be an objection to an institution that it is an anomaly, and my friend the Member of Parliament will shudder in his grave. But let us in the meanwhile rather endeavor that in twenty years' time it may, in English literature, be an objection to a proposition that it is absurd. That will be a change so vast, that the imagination almost fails to grasp it. *Ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.*[1]

If I have insisted so much on the course which criticism must take where politics and religion are concerned, it is because, where these burning matters are in question, it is most likely to go astray. I have wished, above all, to insist on the attitude which criticism should adopt towards things in general; on its right tone and temper of mind. But then comes another question as to the subject-matter which literary criticism should most seek. Here, in general, its course is determined for it by the idea which is the law of its being: the idea of a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas. By the very nature of things, as England is not all the world, much of the best that is known and thought in the world cannot be of English growth, must be foreign; by the nature of things, again, it is just this that we are least likely to know, while English thought is streaming in upon us from all sides, and takes excellent care that we shall not be ignorant of its existence. The

English critic of literature, therefore, must dwell much on foreign thought, and with particular heed on any part of it, which, while significant and fruitful in itself, is for any reason specially likely to escape him. Again, judging is often spoken of as the critic's one business, and so in some sense it is; but the judgment which almost insensibly forms itself in a fair and clear mind, along with fresh knowledge, is the valuable one; and thus knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge, must be the critic's great concern for himself. And it is by communicating fresh knowledge, and letting his own judgment pass along with it, — but insensibly, and in the second place, not the first, as a sort of companion and clue, not as an abstract lawgiver, — that the critic will generally do most good to his readers. Sometimes, no doubt, for the sake of establishing an author's place in literature, and his relation to a central standard (and if this is not done, how are we to get at our *best in the world?*) criticism may have to deal with a subject-matter so familiar that fresh knowledge is out of the question, and then it must be all judgment; an enunciation and detailed application of principles. Here the great safeguard is never to let oneself become abstract, always to retain an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what one is saying, and, the moment this fails us, to be sure that something is wrong. Still under all circumstances, this mere judgment and application of principles is, in itself, not the most satisfactory work to the critic; like mathematics, it is tautological, and cannot well give us, like fresh learning, the sense of creative activity.

But stop, some one will say; all this talk is of no practical use to us whatever; this criticism of yours is not what we have in our minds when we speak of criticism; when we speak of critics and criticism, we mean critics

and criticism of the current English literature of the day; when you offer to tell criticism its function, it is to this criticism that we expect you to address yourself. I am sorry for it, for I am afraid I must disappoint these expectations. I am bound by my own definition of criticism; *a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world.* How much of current English literature comes into this "best that is known and thought in the world"? Not very much I fear; certainly less, at this moment, than of the current literature of France or Germany. Well, then, am I to alter my definition of criticism, in order to meet the requirements of a number of practising English critics, who, after all, are free in their choice of a business? That would be making criticism lend itself just to one of those alien practical considerations, which, I have said, are so fatal to it. One may say, indeed, to those who have to deal with the mass — so much better disregarded — of current English literature, that they may at all events endeavor, in dealing with this, to try it, so far as they can, by the standard of the best that is known and thought in the world; one may say, that to get anywhere near this standard, every critic should try and possess one great literature, at least, besides his own; and the more unlike his own, the better. But, after all, the criticism I am really concerned with, — the criticism which alone can much help us for the future, the criticism which, throughout Europe, is at the present day meant, when so much stress is laid on the importance of criticism and the critical spirit, — is a criticism which regards Europe as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have, for their proper outfit, a

knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special, local, and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this program. And what is that but saying that we too, all of us, as individuals, the more thoroughly we carry it out, shall make the more progress?

There is so much inviting us! — what are we to take? what will nourish us in growth towards perfection? That is the question which, with the immense field of life and of literature lying before him, the critic has to answer; for himself first, and afterwards for others. In this idea of the critic's business the essays brought together in the following pages have had their origin; in this idea, widely different as are their subjects, they have, perhaps, their unity.

I conclude with what I said at the beginning: to have the sense of creative activity is the great happiness and the great proof of being alive, and it is not denied to criticism to have it; but then criticism must be sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge. Then it may have, in no contemptible measure, a joyful sense of creative activity; a sense which a man of insight and conscience will prefer to what he might derive from a poor, starved, fragmentary, inadequate creation. And at some epochs no other creation is possible.

Still, in full measure, the sense of creative activity belongs only to genuine creation; in literature we must never forget that. But what true man of letters ever can forget it? It is no such common matter for a gifted nature to come into possession of a current of true and living ideas, and to produce amidst the inspiration of them, that we are likely to underrate it. The epochs

of Æschylus and Shakespeare make us feel their pre-eminence. In an epoch like those is, no doubt, the true life of literature; there is the promised land, towards which criticism can only beckon. That promised land it will not be ours to enter, and we shall die in the wilderness: but to have desired to enter it, to have saluted it from afar, is already, perhaps, the best distinction among contemporaries; it will certainly be the best title to esteem with posterity.

THE STUDY OF POETRY[1]

"THE future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay. There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea *is* the fact. The strongest part of our religion to-day is its unconscious poetry." [2]

Let me be permitted to quote these words of my own, as uttering the thought which should, in my opinion, go with us and govern us in all our study of poetry. In the present work it is the course of one great contributory stream to the world-river of poetry that we are invited to follow. We are here invited to trace the stream of English poetry. But whether we set ourselves, as here, to follow only one of the several streams that make the mighty river of poetry, or whether we seek to know them all, our governing thought should be the same. We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive of it. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies, than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto. More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to con-

sole us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry. Science, I say, will appear incomplete without it. For finely and truly does Wordsworth call poetry "the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science";[1] and what is a countenance without its expression? Again, Wordsworth finely and truly calls poetry "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge":[1] our religion, parading evidences such as those on which the popular mind relies now; our philosophy, pluming itself on its reasonings about causation and finite and infinite being; what are they but the shadows and dreams and false shows of knowledge? The day will come when we shall wonder at ourselves for having trusted to them, for having taken them seriously; and the more we perceive their hollowness, the more we shall prize "the breath and finer spirit of knowledge" offered to us by poetry.

But if we conceive thus highly of the destinies of poetry, we must also set our standard for poetry high, since poetry, to be capable of fulfilling such high destinies, must be poetry of a high order of excellence. We must accustom ourselves to a high standard and to a strict judgment. Sainte-Beuve relates that Napoleon one day said, when somebody was spoken of in his presence as a charlatan: "Charlatan as much as you please; but where is there *not* charlatanism?" — "Yes," answers Sainte-Beuve,[2] "in politics, in the art of governing mankind, that is perhaps true. But in the order of thought, in art, the glory, the eternal honor is that charlatanism shall find no entrance; herein lies the inviolableness of that noble portion of man's being." It is admirably said, and let us hold fast to it. In poetry, which is thought and art in one, it is

the glory, the eternal honor, that charlatanism shall find no entrance; that this noble sphere be kept inviolate and inviolable. Charlatanism is for confusing or obliterating the distinctions between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound or only half-sound, true and untrue or only half-true. It is charlatanism, conscious or unconscious, whenever we confuse or obliterate these. And in poetry, more than anywhere else, it is unpermissible to confuse or obliterate them. For in poetry the distinction between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound or only half-sound, true and untrue or only half-true, is of paramount importance. It is of paramount importance because of the high destinies of poetry. In poetry, as a criticism of life [1] under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty, the spirit of our race will find, we have said, as time goes on and as other helps fail, its consolation and stay. But the consolation and stay will be of power in proportion to the power of the criticism of life. And the criticism of life will be of power in proportion as the poetry conveying it is excellent rather than inferior, sound rather than unsound or half-sound, true rather than untrue or half-true.

The best poetry is what we want; the best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us, as nothing else can. A clearer, deeper sense of the best [2] in poetry, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, is the most precious benefit which we can gather from a poetical collection such as the present. And yet in the very nature and conduct of such a collection there is inevitably something which tends to obscure in us the consciousness of what our benefit should be, and to distract us from the pursuit of it. We should therefore steadily set it before our

minds at the outset, and should compel ourselves to revert constantly to the thought of it as we proceed.

Yes; constantly in reading poetry, a sense for the best, the really excellent, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, should be present in our minds and should govern our estimate of what we read. But this real estimate, the only true one, is liable to be superseded, if we are not watchful, by two other kinds of estimate, the historic estimate and the personal estimate, both of which are fallacious. A poet or a poem may count to us historically, they may count to us on grounds personal to ourselves, and they may count to us really. They may count to us historically. The course of development of a nation's language, thought, and poetry, is profoundly interesting; and by regarding a poet's work as a stage in this course of development we may easily bring ourselves to make it of more importance as poetry than in itself it really is, we may come to use a language of quite exaggerated praise in criticising it; in short, to over-rate it. So arises in our poetic judgments the fallacy caused by the estimate which we may call historic. Then, again, a poet or a poem may count to us on grounds personal to ourselves. Our personal affinities, likings, and circumstances, have great power to sway our estimate of this or that poet's work, and to make us attach more importance to it as poetry than in itself it really possesses, because to us it is, or has been, of high importance. Here also we over-rate the object of our interest, and apply to it a language of praise which is quite exaggerated. And thus we get the source of a second fallacy in our poetic judgments — the fallacy caused by an estimate which we may call personal.

Both fallacies are natural. It is evident how naturally the study of the history and development of a

poetry may incline a man to pause over reputations and works once conspicuous but now obscure, and to quarrel with a careless public for skipping, in obedience to mere tradition and habit, from one famous name or work in its national poetry to another, ignorant of what it misses, and of the reason for keeping what it keeps, and of the whole process of growth in its poetry. The French have become diligent students of their own early poetry, which they long neglected; the study makes many of them dissatisfied with their so-called classical poetry, the court-tragedy of the seventeenth century, a poetry which Pellisson[1] long ago reproached with its want of the true poetic stamp, with its *politesse stérile et rampante*,[2] but which nevertheless has reigned in France as absolutely as if it had been the perfection of classical poetry indeed. The dissatisfaction is natural; yet a lively and accomplished critic, M. Charles d'Héricault,[3] the editor of Clément Marot, goes too far when he says that "the cloud of glory playing round a classic is a mist as dangerous to the future of a literature as it is intolerable for the purposes of history." "It hinders," he goes on, "it hinders us from seeing more than one single point, the culminating and exceptional point, the summary, fictitious and arbitrary, of a thought and of a work. It substitutes a halo for a physiognomy, it puts a statue where there was once a man, and hiding from us all trace of the labor, the attempts, the weaknesses, the failures, it claims not study but veneration; it does not show us how the thing is done, it imposes upon us a model. Above all, for the historian this creation of classic personages is inadmissible; for it withdraws the poet from his time, from his proper life, it breaks historical relationships, it blinds criticism by conventional admiration, and renders the investigation

of literary origins unacceptable. It gives us a human personage no longer, but a God seated immovable amidst His perfect work, like Jupiter on Olympus; and hardly will it be possible for the young student, to whom such work is exhibited at such a distance from him, to believe that it did not issue ready made from that divine head."

All this is brilliantly and tellingly said, but we must plead for a distinction. Everything depends on the reality of a poet's classic character. If he is a dubious classic, let us sift him; if he is a false classic, let us explode him. But if he is a real classic, if his work belongs to the class of the very best (for this is the true and right meaning of the word *classic*, *classical*), then the great thing for us is to feel and enjoy his work as deeply as ever we can, and to appreciate the wide difference between it and all work which has not the same high character. This is what is salutary, this is what is formative; this is the great benefit to be got from the study of poetry. Everything which interferes with it, which hinders it, is injurious. True, we must read our classic with open eyes, and not with eyes blinded with superstition; we must perceive when his work comes short, when it drops out of the class of the very best, and we must rate it, in such cases, at its proper value. But the use of this negative criticism is not in itself, it is entirely in its enabling us to have a clearer sense and a deeper enjoyment of what is truly excellent. To trace the labor, the attempts, the weaknesses, the failures of a genuine classic, to acquaint oneself with his time and his life and his historical relationships, is mere literary dilettantism unless it has that clear sense and deeper enjoyment for its end. It may be said that the more we know about a classic the better we shall enjoy him; and, if we

lived as long as Methuselah and had all of us heads of perfect clearness and wills of perfect steadfastness, this might be true in fact as it is plausible in theory. But the case here is much the same as the case with the Greek and Latin studies of our schoolboys. The elaborate philological groundwork which we require them to lay is in theory an admirable preparation for appreciating the Greek and Latin authors worthily. The more thoroughly we lay the groundwork, the better we shall be able, it may be said, to enjoy the authors. True, if time were not so short, and schoolboys' wits not so soon tired and their power of attention exhausted; only, as it is, the elaborate philological preparation goes on, but the authors are little known and less enjoyed. So with the investigator of "historic origins" in poetry. He ought to enjoy the true classic all the better for his investigations; he often is distracted from the enjoyment of the best, and with the less good he overbusies himself, and is prone to over-rate it in proportion to the trouble which it has cost him.

The idea of tracing historic origins and historical relationships cannot be absent from a compilation like the present. And naturally the poets to be exhibited in it will be assigned to those persons for exhibition who are known to prize them highly, rather than to those who have no special inclination towards them. Moreover the very occupation with an author, and the business of exhibiting him, disposes us to affirm and amplify his importance. In the present work, therefore, we are sure of frequent temptation to adopt the historic estimate, or the personal estimate, and to forget the real estimate; which latter, nevertheless, we must employ if we are to make poetry yield us its full benefit. So high is that benefit, the benefit of clearly feeling and of deeply enjoying the really excellent,

the truly classic in poetry, that we do well, I say, to set it fixedly before our minds as our object in studying poets and poetry, and to make the desire of attaining it the one principle to which, as the *Imitation* says, whatever we may read or come to know, we always return. *Cum multa legeris et cognoveris, ad unum semper oportet redire principium.*[1]

The historic estimate is likely in especial to affect our judgment and our language when we are dealing with ancient poets; the personal estimate when we are dealing with poets our contemporaries, or at any rate modern. The exaggerations due to the historic estimate are not in themselves, perhaps, of very much gravity. Their report hardly enters the general ear; probably they do not always impose even on the literary men who adopt them. But they lead to a dangerous abuse of language. So we hear Cædmon,[2] amongst our own poets, compared to Milton. I have already noticed the enthusiasm of one accomplished French critic for "historic origins." Another eminent French critic, M. Vitet,[3] comments upon that famous document of the early poetry of his nation, the *Chanson de Roland*.[4] It is indeed a most interesting document. The *joculator* or *jongleur* Taillefer, who was with William the Conqueror's army at Hastings, marched before the Norman troops, so said the tradition, singing "of Charlemagne and of Roland and of Oliver, and of the vassals who died at Roncevaux"; and it is suggested that in the *Chanson de Roland* by one Turoldus or Théroulde, a poem preserved in a manuscript of the twelfth century in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, we have certainly the matter, perhaps even some of the words, of the chant which Taillefer sang. The poem has vigor and freshness; it is not without pathos. But M. Vitet is not satisfied with seeing in it

a document of some poetic value, and of very high historic and linguistic value; he sees in it a grand and beautiful work, a monument of epic genius. In its general design he finds the grandiose conception, in its details he finds the constant union of simplicity with greatness, which are the marks, he truly says, of the genuine epic, and distinguish it from the artificial epic of literary ages. One thinks of Homer; this is the sort of praise which is given to Homer, and justly given. Higher praise there cannot well be, and it is the praise due to epic poetry of the highest order only, and to no other. Let us try, then, the *Chanson de Roland* at its best. Roland, mortally wounded, lays himself down under a pine-tree, with his face turned towards Spain and the enemy —

> "De plusurs choses à remembrer li prist,
> De tantes teres cume li bers cunquist,
> De dulce France, des humes de sun lign,
> De Carlemagne sun seignor ki l'nurrit." [1]

That is primitive work, I repeat, with an undeniable poetic quality of its own. It deserves such praise, and such praise is sufficient for it. But now turn to Homer —

> Ὣς φάτο· τοὺς δ' ἤδη κατέχεν φυσίζοος αἶα
> ἐν Λακεδαίμονι αὖθι, φίλῃ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ [2]

We are here in another world, another order of poetry altogether; here is rightly due such supreme praise as that which M. Vitet gives to the *Chanson de Roland*. If our words are to have any meaning, if our judgments are to have any solidity, we must not heap that supreme praise upon poetry of an order immeasurably inferior.

Indeed there can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the

great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry. Of course we are not to require this other poetry to resemble them; it may be very dissimilar. But if we have any tact we shall find them, when we have lodged them well in our minds, an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality, in all other poetry which we may place beside them. Short passages, even single lines, will serve our turn quite sufficiently. Take the two lines which I have just quoted from Homer, the poet's comment on Helen's mention of her brothers; — or take his

> Ἆ δειλώ, τί σφῶϊ δόμεν Πηλῆϊ ἄνακτι
> θνητῷ; ὑμεῖς δ' ἐστὸν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε.
> ἦ ἵνα δυστήνοισι μετ' ἀνδράσιν ἄλγε' ἔχητον;[1]

the address of Zeus to the horses of Peleus; — or take finally his

> Καὶ σέ, γέρον, τὸ πρὶν μὲν ἀκούομεν ὄλβιον εἶναι·[2]

the words of Achilles to Priam, a suppliant before him. Take that incomparable line and a half of Dante, Ugolino's tremendous words —

> "Io no piangeva; sì dentro impietrai.
> Piangevan elli . . ."[3]

take the lovely words of Beatrice to Virgil —

> "Io son fatta da Dio, sua mercè, tale,
> Che la vostra miseria non mi tange,
> Nè fiamma d'esto incendio non m'assale . . ."[4]

take the simple, but perfect, single line —

> "In la sua volontade è nostra pace."[5]

Take of Shakespeare a line or two of Henry the Fourth's expostulation with sleep —

> "Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
> Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
> In cradle of the rude imperious surge . . ."[6]

and take, as well, Hamlet's dying request to Horatio —

> "If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
> To tell my story . . ." [1]

Take of Milton that Miltonic passage —

> "Darken'd so, yet shone
> Above them all the archangel; but his face
> Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd, and care
> Sat on his faded cheek . . ." [2]

add two such lines as —

> "And courage never to submit or yield
> And what is else not to be overcome . . ." [3]

and finish with the exquisite close to the loss of Proserpine, the loss

> ". . . which cost Ceres all that pain
> To seek her through the world." [4]

These few lines, if we have tact and can use them, are enough even of themselves to keep clear and sound our judgments about poetry, to save us from fallacious estimates of it, to conduct us to a real estimate.

The specimens I have quoted differ widely from one another, but they have in common this: the possession of the very highest poetical quality. If we are thoroughly penetrated by their power, we shall find that we have acquired a sense enabling us, whatever poetry may be laid before us, to feel the degree in which a high poetical quality is present or wanting there. Critics give themselves great labor to draw out what in the abstract constitutes the characters of a high quality of poetry. It is much better simply to have recourse to concrete examples; — to take specimens of poetry of the high, the very highest quality, and to say: The characters of a high quality of poetry are what is expressed *there*. They are far better

recognized by being felt in the verse of the master, than by being perused in the prose of the critic. Nevertheless if we are urgently pressed to give some critical account of them, we may safely, perhaps, venture on laying down, not indeed how and why the characters arise, but where and in what they arise. They are in the matter and substance of the poetry, and they are in its manner and style. Both of these, the substance and matter on the one hand, the style and manner on the other, have a mark, an accent, of high beauty, worth, and power. But if we are asked to define this mark and accent in the abstract, our answer must be: No, for we should thereby be darkening the question, not clearing it. The mark and accent are as given by the substance and matter of that poetry, by the style and manner of that poetry, and of all other poetry which is akin to it in quality.

Only one thing we may add as to the substance and matter of poetry, guiding ourselves by Aristotle's profound observation[1] that the superiority of poetry over history consists in its possessing a higher truth and a higher seriousness (*φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον*). Let us add, therefore, to what we have said, this: that the substance and matter of the best poetry acquire their special character from possessing, in an eminent degree, truth and seriousness. We may add yet further, what is in itself evident, that to the style and manner of the best poetry their special character, their accent, is given by their diction, and, even yet more, by their movement. And though we distinguish between the two characters, the two accents, of superiority, yet they are nevertheless vitally connected one with the other. The superior character of truth and seriousness, in the matter and substance of the best poetry, is inseparable from the superiority

of diction and movement marking its style and manner. The two superiorities are closely related, and are in steadfast proportion one to the other. So far as high poetic truth and seriousness are wanting to a poet's matter and substance, so far also, we may be sure, will a high poetic stamp of diction and movement be wanting to his style and manner. In proportion as this high stamp of diction and movement, again, is absent from a poet's style and manner, we shall find, also, that high poetic truth and seriousness are absent from his substance and matter.

So stated, these are but dry generalities; their whole force lies in their application. And I could wish every student of poetry to make the application of them for himself. Made by himself, the application would impress itself upon his mind far more deeply than made by me. Neither will my limits allow me to make any full application of the generalities above propounded; but in the hope of bringing out, at any rate, some significance in them, and of establishing an important principle more firmly by their means, I will, in the space which remains to me, follow rapidly from the commencement the course of our English poetry with them in my view.

Once more I return to the early poetry of France, with which our own poetry, in its origins, is indissolubly connected. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that seed-time of all modern language and literature, the poetry of France had a clear predominance in Europe. Of the two divisions of that poetry, its productions in the *langue d'oïl* and its productions in the *langue d'oc*, the poetry of the *langue d'oc*,[1] of southern France, of the troubadours, is of importance because of its effect on Italian literature; — the first literature of modern Europe to strike the true and

grand note, and to bring forth, as in Dante and Petrarch it brought forth, classics. But the predominance of French poetry in Europe, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is due to its poetry of the *langue d'oïl*, the poetry of northern France and of the tongue which is now the French language. In the twelfth century the bloom of this romance-poetry was earlier and stronger in England, at the court of our Anglo-Norman kings, than in France itself. But it was a bloom of French poetry; and as our native poetry formed itself, it formed itself out of this. The romance-poems which took possession of the heart and imagination of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are French; "they are," as Southey justly says, "the pride of French literature, nor have we anything which can be placed in competition with them." Themes were supplied from all quarters: but the romance-setting which was common to them all, and which gained the ear of Europe, was French. This constituted for the French poetry, literature, and language, at the height of the Middle Age, an unchallenged predominance. The Italian Brunetto Latini,[1] the master of Dante, wrote his *Treasure* in French because, he says, "la parleure en est plus délitable et plus commune à toutes gens." In the same century, the thirteenth, the French romance-writer, Christian of Troyes,[2] formulates the claims, in chivalry and letters, of France, his native country, as follows: —

"Or vous ert par ce livre apris,
Que Gresse ot de chevalerie
Le premier los et de clergie;
Puis vint chevalerie à Rome,
Et de la clergie la some,
Qui ore est en France venue.
Diex doinst qu'ele i soit retenue
Et que li lius li abelisse

Tant que de France n'isse
L'onor qui s'i est arestée ! "

" Now by this book you will learn that first Greece had the renown for chivalry and letters : then chivalry and the primacy in letters passed to Rome, and now it is come to France. God grant it may be kept there ; and that the place may please it so well, that the honor which has come to make stay in France may never depart thence ! "

Yet it is now all gone, this French romance-poetry, of which the weight of substance and the power of style are not unfairly represented by this extract from Christian of Troyes. Only by means of the historic estimate can we persuade ourselves now to think that any of it is of poetical importance.

But in the fourteenth century there comes an Englishman nourished on this poetry ; taught his trade by this poetry, getting words, rhyme, meter from this poetry ; for even of that stanza[1] which the Italians used, and which Chaucer derived immediately from the Italians, the basis and suggestion was probably given in France. Chaucer (I have already named him) fascinated his contemporaries, but so too did Christian of Troyes and Wolfram of Eschenbach.[2] Chaucer's power of fascination, however, is enduring ; his poetical importance does not need the assistance of the historic estimate ; it is real. He is a genuine source of joy and strength, which is flowing still for us and will flow always. He will be read, as time goes on, far more generally than he is read now. His language is a cause of difficulty for us ; but so also, and I think in quite as great a degree, is the language of Burns. In Chaucer's case, as in that of Burns, it is a difficulty to be unhesitatingly accepted and overcome.

If we ask ourselves wherein consists the immense

superiority of Chaucer's poetry over the romance-poetry — why it is that in passing from this to Chaucer we suddenly feel ourselves to be in another world, we shall find that his superiority is both in the substance of his poetry and in the style of his poetry. His superiority in substance is given by his large, free, simple, clear yet kindly view of human life, — so unlike the total want, in the romance-poets, of all intelligent command of it. Chaucer has not their helplessness; he has gained the power to survey the world from a central, a truly human point of view. We have only to call to mind the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. The right comment upon it is Dryden's: "It is sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that *here is God's plenty*."[1] And again: "He is a perpetual fountain of good sense." It is by a large, free, sound representation of things, that poetry, this high criticism of life, has truth of substance; and Chaucer's poetry has truth of substance.

Of his style and manner, if we think first of the romance-poetry and then of Chaucer's divine liquidness of diction, his divine fluidity of movement, it is difficult to speak temperately. They are irresistible, and justify all the rapture with which his successors speak of his "gold dew-drops of speech." Johnson misses the point entirely when he finds fault with Dryden for ascribing to Chaucer the first refinement of our numbers, and says that Gower[2] also can show smooth numbers and easy rhymes. The refinement of our numbers means something far more than this. A nation may have versifiers with smooth numbers and easy rhymes, and yet may have no real poetry at all. Chaucer is the father of our splendid English poetry; he is our "well of English undefiled," because by the lovely charm of his diction, the lovely charm of his movement, he makes an epoch and founds a tradition.

In Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, we can follow the tradition of the liquid diction, the fluid movement, of Chaucer; at one time it is his liquid diction of which in these poets we feel the virtue, and at another time it is his fluid movement. And the virtue is irresistible.

Bounded as is my space, I must yet find room for an example of Chaucer's virtue, as I have given examples to show the virtue of the great classics. I feel disposed to say that a single line is enough to show the charm of Chaucer's verse; that merely one line like this —

"O martyr souded [1] in virginitee!"

has a virtue of manner and movement such as we shall not find in all the verse of romance-poetry; — but this is saying nothing. The virtue is such as we shall not find, perhaps, in all English poetry, outside the poets whom I have named as the special inheritors of Chaucer's tradition. A single line, however, is too little if we have not the strain of Chaucer's verse well in our memory; let us take a stanza. It is from *The Prioress's Tale*, the story of the Christian child murdered in a Jewry —

"My throte is cut unto my nekke-bone
Saidè this child, and as by way of kinde
I should have deyd, yea, longè time agone;
But Jesu Christ, as ye in bookès finde,
Will that his glory last and be in minde,
And for the worship of his mother dere
Yet may I sing *O Alma* loud and clere."

Wordsworth has modernized this Tale, and to feel how delicate and evanescent is the charm of verse, we have only to read Wordsworth's first three lines of this stanza after Chaucer's —

"My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,
Said this young child, and by the law of kind
I should have died, yea, many hours ago."

The charm is departed. It is often said that the power of liquidness and fluidity in Chaucer's verse was dependent upon a free, a licentious dealing with language, such as is now impossible; upon a liberty, such as Burns too enjoyed, of making words like *neck*, *bird*, into a dissyllable by adding to them, and words like *cause*, *rhyme*, into a dissyllable by sounding the *e* mute. It is true that Chaucer's fluidity is conjoined with this liberty, and is admirably served by it; but we ought not to say that it was dependent upon it. It was dependent upon his talent. Other poets with a like liberty do not attain to the fluidity of Chaucer; Burns himself does not attain to it. Poets, again, who have a talent akin to Chaucer's, such as Shakespeare or Keats, have known how to attain to his fluidity without the like liberty.

And yet Chaucer is not one of the great classics. His poetry transcends and effaces, easily and without effort, all the romance-poetry of Catholic Christendom; it transcends and effaces all the English poetry contemporary with it, it transcends and effaces all the English poetry subsequent to it down to the age of Elizabeth. Of such avail is poetic truth of substance, in its natural and necessary union with poetic truth of style. And yet, I say, Chaucer is not one of the great classics. He has not their accent. What is wanting to him is suggested by the mere mention of the name of the first great classic of Christendom, the immortal poet who died eighty years before Chaucer, — Dante. The accent of such verse as

"In la sua volontade è nostra pace . . ."

is altogether beyond Chaucer's reach; we praise him, but we feel that this accent is out of the question for him. It may be said that it was necessarily out of the

reach of any poet in the England of that stage of growth. Possibly; but we are to adopt a real, not a historic, estimate of poetry. However we may account for its absence, something is wanting, then, to the poetry of Chaucer, which poetry must have before it can be placed in the glorious class of the best. And there is no doubt what that something is. It is the σπουδαιότης, the high and excellent seriousness, which Aristotle assigns as one of the grand virtues of poetry. The substance of Chaucer's poetry, his view of things and his criticism of life, has largeness, freedom, shrewdness, benignity; but it has not this high seriousness. Homer's criticism of life has it, Dante's has it, Shakespeare's has it. It is this chiefly which gives to our spirits what they can rest upon; and with the increasing demands of our modern ages upon poetry, this virtue of giving us what we can rest upon will be more and more highly esteemed. A voice from the slums of Paris, fifty or sixty years after Chaucer, the voice of poor Villon [1] out of his life of riot and crime, has at its happy moments (as, for instance, in the last stanza of *La Belle Heaulmière* [2]) more of this important poetic virtue of seriousness than all the productions of Chaucer. But its apparition in Villon, and in men like Villon, is fitful; the greatness of the great poets, the power of their criticism of life, is that their virtue is sustained.

To our praise, therefore, of Chaucer as a poet there must be this limitation: he lacks the high seriousness of the great classics, and therewith an important part of their virtue. Still, the main fact for us to bear in mind about Chaucer is his sterling value according to that real estimate which we firmly adopt for all poets. He has poetic truth of substance, though he has not high poetic seriousness, and corresponding to his

truth of substance he has an exquisite virtue of style and manner. With him is born our real poetry.

For my present purpose I need not dwell on our Elizabethan poetry, or on the continuation and close of this poetry in Milton. We all of us profess to be agreed in the estimate of this poetry; we all of us recognize it as great poetry, our greatest, and Shakespeare and Milton as our poetical classics. The real estimate, here, has universal currency. With the next age of our poetry divergency and difficulty begin. An historic estimate of that poetry has established itself; and the question is, whether it will be found to coincide with the real estimate.

The age of Dryden, together with our whole eighteenth century which followed it, sincerely believed itself to have produced poetical classics of its own, and even to have made advance, in poetry, beyond all its predecessors. Dryden regards as not seriously disputable the opinion "that the sweetness of English verse was never understood or practised by our fathers."[1] Cowley could see nothing at all in Chaucer's poetry.[2] Dryden heartily admired it, and, as we have seen, praised its matter admirably; but of its exquisite manner and movement all he can find to say is that "there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect."[3] Addison, wishing to praise Chaucer's numbers, compares them with Dryden's own. And all through the eighteenth century, and down even into our own times, the stereotyped phrase of approbation for good verse found in our early poetry has been, that it even approached the verse of Dryden, Addison, Pope, and Johnson.

Are Dryden and Pope poetical classics? Is the historic estimate, which represents them as such, and

which has been so long established that it cannot easily give way, the real estimate? Wordsworth and Coleridge, as is well known, denied it;[1] but the authority of Wordsworth and Coleridge does not weigh much with the young generation, and there are many signs to show that the eighteenth century and its judgments are coming into favor again. Are the favorite poets of the eighteenth century classics?

It is impossible within my present limits to discuss the question fully. And what man of letters would not shrink from seeming to dispose dictatorially of the claims of two men who are, at any rate, such masters in letters as Dryden and Pope; two men of such admirable talent, both of them, and one of them, Dryden, a man, on all sides, of such energetic and genial power? And yet, if we are to gain the full benefit from poetry, we must have the real estimate of it. I cast about for some mode of arriving, in the present case, at such an estimate without offence. And perhaps the best way is to begin, as it is easy to begin, with cordial praise.

When we find Chapman, the Elizabethan translator of Homer, expressing himself in his preface thus: "Though truth in her very nakedness sits in so deep a pit, that from Gades to Aurora and Ganges few eyes can sound her, I hope yet those few here will so discover and confirm that, the date being out of her darkness in this morning of our poet, he shall now gird his temples with the sun," — we pronounce that such a prose is intolerable. When we find Milton writing: "And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he, who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem,"[2] — we pronounce that such a prose has its own grandeur, but

that it is obsolete and inconvenient. But when we find Dryden telling us: "What Virgil wrote in the vigor of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write,"[1] — then we exclaim that here at last we have the true English prose, a prose such as we would all gladly use if we only knew how. Yet Dryden was Milton's contemporary.

But after the Restoration the time had come when our nation felt the imperious need of a fit prose. So, too, the time had likewise come when our nation felt the imperious need of freeing itself from the absorbing preoccupation which religion in the Puritan age had exercised. It was impossible that this freedom should be brought about without some negative excess, without some neglect and impairment of the religious life of the soul; and the spiritual history of the eighteenth century shows us that the freedom was not achieved without them. Still, the freedom was achieved; the preoccupation, an undoubtedly baneful and retarding one if it had continued, was got rid of. And as with religion amongst us at that period, so it was also with letters. A fit prose was a necessity; but it was impossible that a fit prose should establish itself amongst us without some touch of frost to the imaginative life of the soul. The needful qualities for a fit prose are regularity, uniformity, precision, balance. The men of letters, whose destiny it may be to bring their nation to the attainment of a fit prose, must of necessity, whether they work in prose or in verse, give a predominating, an almost exclusive attention to the qualities of regularity, uniformity, precision, balance. But an almost exclusive attention to these qualities involves some repression and silencing of poetry.

We are to regard Dryden as the puissant and glorious founder, Pope as the splendid high priest, of our age of prose and reason, of our excellent and indispensable eighteenth century. For the purposes of their mission and destiny their poetry, like their prose, is admirable. Do you ask me whether Dryden's verse, take it almost where you will, is not good?

> "A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,
> Fed on the lawns and in the forest ranged."[1]

I answer: Admirable for the purposes of the inaugurator of an age of prose and reason. Do you ask me whether Pope's verse, take it almost where you will, is not good?

> "To Hounslow Heath I point, and Banstead Down;
> Thence comes your mutton, and these chicks my own."[2]

I answer: Admirable for the purposes of the high priest of an age of prose and reason. But do you ask me whether such verse proceeds from men with an adequate poetic criticism of life, from men whose criticism of life has a high seriousness, or even, without that high seriousness, has poetic largeness, freedom, insight, benignity? Do you ask me whether the application of ideas to life in the verse of these men, often a powerful application, no doubt, is a powerful *poetic* application? Do you ask me whether the poetry of these men has either the matter or the inseparable manner of such an adequate poetic criticism; whether it has the accent of

> "Absent thee from felicity awhile . . ."

or of

> "And what is else not to be overcome . . ."

or of

> "O martyr souded in virginitee!"

I answer: It has not and cannot have them; it is the poetry of the builders of an age of prose and reason.

Though they may write in verse, though they may in a certain sense be masters of the art of versification, Dryden and Pope are not classics of our poetry, they are classics of our prose.

Gray is our poetical classic of that literature and age; the position of Gray is singular, and demands a word of notice here. He has not the volume or the power of poets who, coming in times more favorable, have attained to an independent criticism of life. But he lived with the great poets, he lived, above all, with the Greeks, through perpetually studying and enjoying them; and he caught their poetic point of view for regarding life, caught their poetic manner. The point of view and the manner are not self-sprung in him, he caught them of others; and he had not the free and abundant use of them. But whereas Addison and Pope never had the use of them, Gray had the use of them at times. He is the scantiest and frailest of classics in our poetry, but he is a classic.

And now, after Gray, we are met, as we draw towards the end of the eighteenth century, we are met by the great name of Burns. We enter now on times where the personal estimate of poets begins to be rife, and where the real estimate of them is not reached without difficulty. But in spite of the disturbing pressures of personal partiality, of national partiality, let us try to reach a real estimate of the poetry of Burns.

By his English poetry Burns in general belongs to the eighteenth century, and has little importance for us.

> "Mark ruffian Violence, distain'd with crimes,
> Rousing elate in these degenerate times;
> View unsuspecting Innocence a prey,
> As guileful Fraud points out the erring way;
> While subtle Litigation's pliant tongue
> The life-blood equal sucks of Right and Wrong!"[1]

Evidently this is not the real Burns, or his name and fame would have disappeared long ago. Nor is Clarinda's[1] love-poet, Sylvander, the real Burns either. But he tells us himself: "These English songs gravel me to death. I have not the command of the language that I have of my native tongue. In fact, I think that my ideas are more barren in English than in Scotch. I have been at *Duncan Gray* to dress it in English, but all I can do is desperately stupid."[2] We English turn naturally, in Burns, to the poems in our own language, because we can read them easily; but in those poems we have not the real Burns.

The real Burns is of course in his Scotch poems. Let us boldly say that of much of this poetry, a poetry dealing perpetually with Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners, a Scotchman's estimate is apt to be personal. A Scotchman is used to this world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners; he has a tenderness for it; he meets its poet half way. In this tender mood he reads pieces like the *Holy Fair* or *Halloween*. But this world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners is against a poet, not for him, when it is not a partial countryman who reads him; for in itself it is not a beautiful world, and no one can deny that it is of advantage to a poet to deal with a beautiful world. Burns's world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners, is often a harsh, a sordid, a repulsive world; even the world of his *Cotter's Saturday Night* is not a beautiful world. No doubt a poet's criticism of life may have such truth and power that it triumphs over its world and delights us. Burns may triumph over his world, often he does triumph over his world, but let us observe how and where. Burns is the first case we have had where the bias of the personal estimate

tends to mislead; let us look at him closely, he can bear it.

Many of his admirers will tell us that we have Burns, convivial, genuine, delightful, here —

> "Leeze me on drink! it gies us mair
> Than either school or college;
> It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
> It pangs us fou o' knowledge.
> Be 't whisky gill or penny wheep
> Or ony stronger potion,
> It never fails, on drinking deep,
> To kittle up our notion
> By night or day."[1]

There is a great deal of that sort of thing in Burns, and it is unsatisfactory, not because it is bacchanalian poetry, but because it has not that accent of sincerity which bacchanalian poetry, to do it justice, very often has. There is something in it of bravado, something which makes us feel that we have not the man speaking to us with his real voice; something, therefore, poetically unsound.

With still more confidence will his admirers tell us that we have the genuine Burns, the great poet, when his strain asserts the independence, equality, dignity, of men, as in the famous song *For a' that and a' that* —

> "A prince can mak' a belted knight,
> A marquis, duke, and a' that;
> But an honest man 's aboon his might,
> Guid faith he mauna fa' that!
> For a' that, and a' that,
> Their dignities, and a' that,
> The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
> Are higher rank than a' that."

Here they find his grand, genuine touches; and still more, when this puissant genius, who so often set morality at defiance, falls moralizing —

"The sacred lowe o' weel-placed love
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it.
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard o' concealing,
But och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling."[1]

Or in a higher strain —

"Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone;
Each spring, its various bias.
Then at the balance let 's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What 's *done* we partly may compute,
But know not what 's resisted."[2]

Or in a better strain yet, a strain, his admirers will say, unsurpassable —

"To make a happy fire-side clime
To weans and wife,
That 's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life."[3]

There is criticism of life for you, the admirers of Burns will say to us; there is the application of ideas to life! There is, undoubtedly. The doctrine of the last-quoted lines coincides almost exactly with what was the aim and end, Xenophon tells us, of all the teaching of Socrates. And the application is a powerful one; made by a man of vigorous understanding, and (need I say?) a master of language.

But for supreme poetical success more is required than the powerful application of ideas to life; it must be an application under the conditions fixed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. Those laws fix as an essential condition, in the poet's treatment of such matters as are here in question, high seriousness; — the high seriousness which comes from absolute

sincerity. The accent of high seriousness, born of absolute sincerity, is what gives to such verse as

"In la sua volontade è nostra pace . . ."

to such criticism of life as Dante's, its power. Is this accent felt in the passages which I have been quoting from Burns? Surely not; surely, if our sense is quick, we must perceive that we have not in those passages a voice from the very inmost soul of the genuine Burns; he is not speaking to us from these depths, he is more or less preaching. And the compensation for admiring such passages less, for missing the perfect poetic accent in them, will be that we shall admire more the poetry where that accent is found.

No; Burns, like Chaucer, comes short of the high seriousness of the great classics, and the virtue of matter and manner which goes with that high seriousness is wanting to his work. At moments he touches it in a profound and passionate melancholy, as in those four immortal lines taken by Byron as a motto for *The Bride of Abydos*, but which have in them a depth of poetic quality such as resides in no verse of Byron's own —

"Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met, or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

But a whole poem of that quality Burns cannot make; the rest, in the *Farewell to Nancy*, is verbiage.

We arrive best at the real estimate of Burns, I think, by conceiving his work as having truth of matter and truth of manner, but not the accent or the poetic virtue of the highest masters. His genuine criticism of life, when the sheer poet in him speaks, is ironic; it is not —

"Thou Power Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here firm I rest, they must be best
Because they are Thy will!" [1]

It is far rather: *Whistle owre the lave o't!* Yet we may say of him as of Chaucer, that of life and the world, as they come before him, his view is large, free, shrewd, benignant, — truly poetic, therefore; and his manner of rendering what he sees is to match. But we must note, at the same time, his great difference from Chaucer. The freedom of Chaucer is heightened, in Burns, by a fiery, reckless energy; the benignity of Chaucer deepens, in Burns, into an overwhelming sense of the pathos of things; — of the pathos of human nature, the pathos, also, of non-human nature. Instead of the fluidity of Chaucer's manner, the manner of Burns has spring, bounding swiftness. Burns is by far the greater force, though he has perhaps less charm. The world of Chaucer is fairer, richer, more significant than that of Burns; but when the largeness and freedom of Burns get full sweep, as in *Tam o' Shanter*, or still more in that puissant and splendid production, *The Jolly Beggars*, his world may be what it will, his poetic genius triumphs over it. In the world of *The Jolly Beggars* there is more than hideousness and squalor, there is bestiality; yet the piece is a superb poetic success. It has a breadth, truth, and power which make the famous scene in Auerbach's Cellar, of Goethe's *Faust*, seem artificial and tame beside it, and which are only matched by Shakespeare and Aristophanes.

Here, where his largeness and freedom serve him so admirably, and also in those poems and songs where to shrewdness he adds infinite archness and wit, and to benignity infinite pathos, where his manner is flaw-

less, and a perfect poetic whole is the result, — in things like the address to the mouse whose home he had ruined, in things like *Duncan Gray*, *Tam Glen*, *Whistle and I'll come to you my Lad*, *Auld Lang Syne* (this list might be made much longer), — here we have the genuine Burns, of whom the real estimate must be high indeed. Not a classic, nor with the excellent σπουδαιότης of the great classics, nor with a verse rising to a criticism of life and a virtue like theirs; but a poet with thorough truth of substance and an answering truth of style, giving us a poetry sound to the core. We all of us have a leaning towards the pathetic, and may be inclined perhaps to prize Burns most for his touches of piercing, sometimes almost intolerable, pathos; for verse like —

> "We twa hae paidl't i' the burn
> From mornin' sun till dine;
> But seas between us braid hae roar'd
> Sin auld lang syne . . . "

where he is as lovely as he is sound. But perhaps it is by the perfection of soundness of his lighter and archer masterpieces that he is poetically most wholesome for us. For the votary misled by a personal estimate of Shelley, as so many of us have been, are, and will be, — of that beautiful spirit building his many-colored haze of words and images

> "Pinnacled dim in the intense inane" — [1]

no contact can be wholesomer than the contact with Burns at his archest and soundest. Side by side with the

> "On the brink of the night and the morning
> My coursers are wont to respire,
> But the Earth has just whispered a warning
> That their flight must be swifter than fire . . ." [2]

of *Prometheus Unbound*, how salutary, how very salutary, to place this from *Tam Glen* —

> "My minnie does constantly deave me
> And bids me beware o' young men;
> They flatter, she says, to deceive me;
> But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?"

But we enter on burning ground as we approach the poetry of times so near to us — poetry like that of Byron, Shelley, and Wordsworth — of which the estimates are so often not only personal, but personal with passion. For my purpose, it is enough to have taken the single case of Burns, the first poet we come to of whose work the estimate formed is evidently apt to be personal, and to have suggested how we may proceed, using the poetry of the great classics as a sort of touchstone, to correct this estimate, as we had previously corrected by the same means the historic estimate where we met with it. A collection like the present, with its succession of celebrated names and celebrated poems, offers a good opportunity to us for resolutely endeavoring to make our estimates of poetry real. I have sought to point out a method which will help us in making them so, and to exhibit it in use so far as to put any one who likes in a way of applying it for himself.

At any rate the end to which the method and the estimate are designed to lead, and from leading to which, if they do lead to it, they get their whole value, — the benefit of being able clearly to feel and deeply to enjoy the best, the truly classic, in poetry, — is an end, let me say it once more at parting, of supreme importance. We are often told that an era is opening in which we are to see multitudes of a common sort of readers, and masses of a common sort of literature; that such readers do not want and could not relish

anything better than such literature, and that to provide it is becoming a vast and profitable industry. Even if good literature entirely lost currency with the world, it would still be abundantly worth while to continue to enjoy it by oneself. But it never will lose currency with the world, in spite of momentary appearances; it never will lose supremacy. Currency and supremacy are insured to it, not indeed by the world's deliberate and conscious choice, but by something far deeper, — by the instinct of self-preservation in humanity.

LITERATURE AND SCIENCE[1]

PRACTICAL people talk with a smile of Plato and of his absolute ideas; and it is impossible to deny that Plato's ideas do often seem unpractical and impracticable, and especially when one views them in connection with the life of a great work-a-day world like the United States. The necessary staple of the life of such a world Plato regards with disdain; handicraft and trade and the working professions he regards with disdain; but what becomes of the life of an industrial modern community if you take handicraft and trade and the working professions out of it? The base mechanic arts and handicrafts, says Plato, bring about a natural weakness in the principle of excellence in a man, so that he cannot govern the ignoble growths in him, but nurses them, and cannot understand fostering any other. Those who exercise such arts and trades, as they have their bodies, he says, marred by their vulgar businesses, so they have their souls, too, bowed and broken by them. And if one of these uncomely people has a mind to seek self-culture and philosophy, Plato compares him to a bald little tinker,[2] who has scraped together money, and has got his release from service, and has had a bath, and bought a new coat, and is rigged out like a bridegroom about to marry the daughter of his master who has fallen into poor and helpless estate.

Nor do the working professions fare any better than trade at the hands of Plato. He draws for us an inimitable picture of the working lawyer,[3] and of his life of bondage; he shows how this bondage from his

youth up has stunted and warped him, and made him small and crooked of soul, encompassing him with difficulties which he is not man enough to rely on justice and truth as means to encounter, but has recourse, for help out of them, to falsehood and wrong. And so, says Plato, this poor creature is bent and broken, and grows up from boy to man without a particle of soundness in him, although exceedingly smart and clever in his own esteem.

One cannot refuse to admire the artist who draws these pictures. But we say to ourselves that his ideas show the influence of a primitive and obsolete order of things, when the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone in honor, and the humble work of the world was done by slaves. We have now changed all that; the modern majesty[1] consists in work, as Emerson declares; and in work, we may add, principally of such plain and dusty kind as the work of cultivators of the ground, handicraftsmen, men of trade and business, men of the working professions. Above all is this true in a great industrious community such as that of the United States.

Now education, many people go on to say, is still mainly governed by the ideas of men like Plato, who lived when the warrior caste and the priestly or philosophical class were alone in honor, and the really useful part of the community were slaves. It is an education fitted for persons of leisure in such a community. This education passed from Greece and Rome to the feudal communities of Europe, where also the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone held in honor, and where the really useful and working part of the community, though not nominally slaves as in the pagan world, were practically not much better off than slaves, and not more seriously regarded. And

how absurd it is, people end by saying, to inflict this education upon an industrious modern community, where very few indeed are persons of leisure, and the mass to be considered has not leisure, but is bound, for its own great good, and for the great good of the world at large, to plain labor and to industrial pursuits, and the education in question tends necessarily to make men dissatisfied with these pursuits and unfitted for them!

That is what is said. So far I must defend Plato, as to plead that his view of education and studies is in the general, as it seems to me, sound enough, and fitted for all sorts and conditions of men, whatever their pursuits may be. "An intelligent man," says Plato, "will prize those studies which result in his soul getting soberness, righteousness, and wisdom, and will less value the others."[1] I cannot consider *that* a bad description of the aim of education, and of the motives which should govern us in the choice of studies, whether we are preparing ourselves for a hereditary seat in the English House of Lords or for the pork trade in Chicago.

Still I admit that Plato's world was not ours, that his scorn of trade and handicraft is fantastic, that he had no conception of a great industrial community such as that of the United States, and that such a community must and will shape its education to suit its own needs. If the usual education handed down to it from the past does not suit it, it will certainly before long drop this and try another. The usual education in the past has been mainly literary. The question is whether the studies which were long supposed to be the best for all of us are practically the best now; whether others are not better. The tyranny of the past, many think, weighs on us injuriously in the pre-

dominance given to letters in education. The question is raised whether, to meet the needs of our modern life, the predominance ought not now to pass from letters to science; and naturally the question is nowhere raised with more energy than here in the United States. The design of abasing what is called "mere literary instruction and education," and of exalting what is called "sound, extensive, and practical scientific knowledge," is, in this intensely modern world of the United States, even more perhaps than in Europe, a very popular design, and makes great and rapid progress.

I am going to ask whether the present movement for ousting letters from their old predominance in education, and for transferring the predominance in education to the natural sciences, whether this brisk and flourishing movement ought to prevail, and whether it is likely that in the end it really will prevail. An objection may be raised which I will anticipate. My own studies have been almost wholly in letters, and my visits to the field of the natural sciences have been very slight and inadequate, although those sciences have always strongly moved my curiosity. A man of letters, it will perhaps be said, is not competent to discuss the comparative merits of letters and natural science as means of education. To this objection I reply, first of all, that his incompetence, if he attempts the discussion but is really incompetent for it, will be abundantly visible; nobody will be taken in; he will have plenty of sharp observers and critics to save mankind from that danger. But the line I am going to follow is, as you will soon discover, so extremely simple, that perhaps it may be followed without failure even by one who for a more ambitious line of discussion would be quite incompetent.

Some of you may possibly remember a phrase of mine which has been the object of a good deal of comment; an observation to the effect that in our culture, the aim being *to know ourselves and the world*, we have, as the means to this end, *to know the best which has been thought and said in the world*.[1] A man of science, who is also an excellent writer and the very prince of debaters, Professor Huxley, in a discourse[2] at the opening of Sir Josiah Mason's college at Birmingham, laying hold of this phrase, expanded it by quoting some more words of mine, which are these: "The civilized world is to be regarded as now being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have for their proper outfit a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special local and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this programme."[3]

Now on my phrase, thus enlarged, Professor Huxley remarks that when I speak of the above-mentioned knowledge as enabling us to know ourselves and the world, I assert *literature* to contain the materials which suffice for thus making us know ourselves and the world. But it is not by any means clear, says he, that after having learnt all which ancient and modern literatures have to tell us, we have laid a sufficiently broad and deep foundation for that criticism of life, that knowledge of ourselves and the world, which constitutes culture. On the contrary, Professor Huxley declares that he finds himself "wholly unable to admit that either nations or individuals will really advance, if their outfit draws nothing from the stores of physical

science. An army without weapons of precision, and with no particular base of operations, might more hopefully enter upon a campaign on the Rhine, than a man, devoid of a knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, upon a criticism of life."

This shows how needful it is for those who are to discuss any matter together, to have a common understanding as to the sense of the terms they employ, — how needful, and how difficult. What Professor Huxley says, implies just the reproach which is so often brought against the study of *belles lettres*, as they are called: that the study is an elegant one, but slight and ineffectual; a smattering of Greek and Latin and other ornamental things, of little use for any one whose object is to get at truth, and to be a practical man. So, too, M. Renan[1] talks of the "superficial humanism" of a school-course which treats us as if we were all going to be poets, writers, preachers, orators, and he opposes this humanism to positive science, or the critical search after truth. And there is always a tendency in those who are remonstrating against the predominance of letters in education, to understand by letters *belles lettres*, and by *belles lettres* a superficial humanism the opposite of science or true knowledge.

But when we talk of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, for instance, which is the knowledge people have called the humanities, I for my part mean a knowledge which is something more than a superficial humanism, mainly decorative. "I call all teaching *scientific*," says Wolf, the critic of Homer, "which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources. For example: a knowledge of classical antiquity is scientific when the remains of classical antiquity are correctly studied in the original languages."

There can be no doubt that Wolf[1] is perfectly right; that all learning is scientific which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources, and that a genuine humanism is scientific.

When I speak of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, therefore, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, I mean more than a knowledge of so much vocabulary, so much grammar, so many portions of authors in the Greek and Latin languages, I mean knowing the Greeks and Romans, and their life and genius, and what they were and did in the world; what we get from them, and what is its value. That, at least, is the ideal; and when we talk of endeavoring to know Greek and Roman antiquity, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, we mean endeavoring so to know them as to satisfy this ideal, however much we may still fall short of it.

The same also as to knowing our own and other modern nations, with the like aim of getting to understand ourselves and the world. To know the best that has been thought and said by the modern nations, is to know, says Professor Huxley, "only what modern *literatures* have to tell us; it is the criticism of life contained in modern literature." And yet "the distinctive character of our times," he urges, "lies in the vast and constantly increasing part which is played by natural knowledge." And how, therefore, can a man, devoid of knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, enter hopefully upon a criticism of modern life?

Let us, I say, be agreed about the meaning of the terms we are using. I talk of knowing the best which has been thought and uttered in the world; Professor Huxley says this means knowing *literature*. Literature is a large word; it may mean everything written

with letters or printed in a book. Euclid's *Elements* and Newton's *Principia* are thus literature. All knowledge that reaches us through books is literature. But by literature Professor Huxley means *belles lettres*. He means to make me say, that knowing the best which has been thought and said by the modern nations is knowing their *belles lettres* and no more. And this is no sufficient equipment, he argues, for a criticism of modern life. But as I do not mean, by knowing ancient Rome, knowing merely more or less of Latin *belles lettres*, and taking no account of Rome's military, and political, and legal, and administrative work in the world; and as, by knowing ancient Greece, I understand knowing her as the giver of Greek art, and the guide to a free and right use of reason and to scientific method, and the founder of our mathematics and physics and astronomy and biology, — I understand knowing her as all this, and not merely knowing certain Greek poems, and histories, and treatises, and speeches, — so as to the knowledge of modern nations also. By knowing modern nations, I mean not merely knowing their *belles lettres*, but knowing also what has been done by such men as Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin. "Our ancestors learned," says Professor Huxley, "that the earth is the centre of the visible universe, and that man is the cynosure of things terrestrial; and more especially was it inculcated that the course of nature had no fixed order, but that it could be, and constantly was, altered." But for us now, continues Professor Huxley, "the notions of the beginning and the end of the world entertained by our forefathers are no longer credible. It is very certain that the earth is not the chief body in the material universe, and that the world is not subordinated to man's use. It is even more certain that nature is the expression of a definite

order, with which nothing interferes." "And yet," he cries, "the purely classical education advocated by the representatives of the humanists in our day gives no inkling of all this!"

In due place and time I will just touch upon that vexed question of classical education; but at present the question is as to what is meant by knowing the best which modern nations have thought and said. It is not knowing their *belles lettres* merely which is meant. To know Italian *belles lettres*, is not to know Italy, and to know English *belles lettres* is not to know England. Into knowing Italy and England there comes a great deal more, Galileo and Newton amongst it. The reproach of being a superficial humanism, a tincture of *belles lettres*, may attach rightly enough to some other disciplines; but to the particular discipline recommended when I proposed knowing the best that has been thought and said in the world, it does not apply. In that best I certainly include what in modern times has been thought and said by the great observers and knowers of nature.

There is, therefore, really no question between Professor Huxley and me as to whether knowing the great results of the modern scientific study of nature is not required as a part of our culture, as well as knowing the products of literature and art. But to follow the processes by which those results are reached, ought, say the friends of physical science, to be made the staple of education for the bulk of mankind. And here there does arise a question between those whom Professor Huxley calls with playful sarcasm "the Levites of culture," and those whom the poor humanist is sometimes apt to regard as its Nebuchadnezzars.

The great results of the scientific investigation of nature we are agreed upon knowing, but how much

of our study are we bound to give to the processes by which those results are reached? The results have their visible bearing on human life. But all the processes, too, all the items of fact, by which those results are reached and established, are interesting. All knowledge is interesting to a wise man, and the knowledge of nature is interesting to all men. It is very interesting to know, that, from the albuminous white of the egg, the chick in the egg gets the materials for its flesh, bones, blood, and feathers; while from the fatty yolk of the egg, it gets the heat and energy which enable it at length to break its shell and begin the world. It is less interesting, perhaps, but still it is interesting, to know that when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water. Moreover, it is quite true that the habit of dealing with facts, which is given by the study of nature, is, as the friends of physical science praise it for being, an excellent discipline. The appeal, in the study of nature, is constantly to observation and experiment; not only is it said that the thing is so, but we can be made to see that it is so. Not only does a man tell us that when a taper burns the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, as a man may tell us, if he likes, that Charon is punting his ferry-boat on the river Styx, or that Victor Hugo is a sublime poet, or Mr. Gladstone the most admirable of statesmen; but we are made to see that the conversion into carbonic acid and water does actually happen. This reality of natural knowledge it is, which makes the friends of physical science contrast it, as a knowledge of things, with the humanist's knowledge, which is, say they, a knowledge of words. And hence Professor Huxley is moved to lay it down that, "for the purpose of attaining real culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least

as effectual as an exclusively literary education." And a certain President of the Section for Mechanical Science in the British Association is, in Scripture phrase, "very bold," and declares that if a man, in his mental training, "has substituted literature and history for natural science, he has chosen the less useful alternative." But whether we go these lengths or not, we must all admit that in natural science the habit gained of dealing with facts is a most valuable discipline, and that every one should have some experience of it.

More than this, however, is demanded by the reformers. It is proposed to make the training in natural science the main part of education, for the great majority of mankind at any rate. And here, I confess, I part company with the friends of physical science, with whom up to this point I have been agreeing. In differing from them, however, I wish to proceed with the utmost caution and diffidence. The smallness of my own acquaintance with the disciplines of natural science is ever before my mind, and I am fearful of doing these disciplines an injustice. The ability and pugnacity of the partisans of natural science make them formidable persons to contradict. The tone of tentative inquiry, which befits a being of dim faculties and bounded knowledge, is the tone I would wish to take and not to depart from. At present it seems to me, that those who are for giving to natural knowledge, as they call it, the chief place in the education of the majority of mankind, leave one important thing out of their account: the constitution of human nature. But I put this forward on the strength of some facts not at all recondite, very far from it; facts capable of being stated in the simplest possible fashion, and to which, if I so state them, the man of science will, I am sure, be willing to allow their due weight.

Deny the facts altogether, I think, he hardly can. He can hardly deny, that when we set ourselves to enumerate the powers which go to the building up of human life, and say that they are the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners, — he can hardly deny that this scheme, though drawn in rough and plain lines enough, and not pretending to scientific exactness, does yet give a fairly true representation of the matter. Human nature is built up by these powers; we have the need for them all. When we have rightly met and adjusted the claims of them all, we shall then be in a fair way for getting soberness, and righteousness with wisdom. This is evident enough, and the friends of physical science would admit it.

But perhaps they may not have sufficiently observed another thing: namely, that the several powers just mentioned are not isolated, but there is, in the generality of mankind, a perpetual tendency to relate them one to another in divers ways. With one such way of relating them I am particularly concerned now. Following our instinct for intellect and knowledge, we acquire pieces of knowledge; and presently in the generality of men, there arises the desire to relate these pieces of knowledge to our sense for conduct, to our sense for beauty, — and there is weariness and dissatisfaction if the desire is balked. Now in this desire lies, I think, the strength of that hold which letters have upon us.

All knowledge is, as I said just now, interesting; and even items of knowledge which from the nature of the case cannot well be related, but must stand isolated in our thoughts, have their interest. Even lists of exceptions have their interest. If we are studying

Greek accents it is interesting to know that *pais* and *pas*, and some other monosyllables of the same form of declension, do not take the circumflex upon the last syllable of the genitive plural, but vary, in this respect, from the common rule. If we are studying physiology, it is interesting to know that the pulmonary artery carries dark blood and the pulmonary vein carries bright blood, departing in this respect from the common rule for the division of labor between the veins and the arteries. But every one knows how we seek naturally to combine the pieces of our knowledge together, to bring them under general rules, to relate them to principles; and how unsatisfactory and tiresome it would be to go on forever learning lists of exceptions, or accumulating items of fact which must stand isolated.

Well, that same need of relating our knowledge, which operates here within the sphere of our knowledge itself, we shall find operating, also, outside that sphere. We experience, as we go on learning and knowing, — the vast majority of us experience, — the need of relating what we have learnt and known to the sense which we have in us for conduct, to the sense which we have in us for beauty.

A certain Greek prophetess of Mantineia in Arcadia, Diotima[1] by name, once explained to the philosopher Socrates that love, and impulse, and bent of all kinds, is, in fact, nothing else but the desire in men that good should forever be present to them. This desire for good, Diotima assured Socrates, is our fundamental desire, of which fundamental desire every impulse in us is only some one particular form. And therefore this fundamental desire it is, I suppose, — this desire in men that good should be forever present to them, — which acts in us when we feel the impulse

for relating our knowledge to our sense for conduct and to our sense for beauty. At any rate, with men in general the instinct exists. Such is human nature. And the instinct, it will be admitted, is innocent, and human nature is preserved by our following the lead of its innocent instincts. Therefore, in seeking to gratify this instinct in question, we are following the instinct of self-preservation in humanity.

But, no doubt, some kinds of knowledge cannot be made to directly serve the instinct in question, cannot be directly related to the sense for beauty, to the sense for conduct. These are instrument-knowledges; they lead on to other knowledges, which can. A man who passes his life in instrument-knowledges is a specialist. They may be invaluable as instruments to something beyond, for those who have the gift thus to employ them; and they may be disciplines in themselves wherein it is useful for every one to have some schooling. But it is inconceivable that the generality of men should pass all their mental life with Greek accents or with formal logic. My friend Professor Sylvester,[1] who is one of the first mathematicians in the world, holds transcendental doctrines as to the virtue of mathematics, but those doctrines are not for common men. In the very Senate House and heart of our English Cambridge I once ventured, though not without an apology for my profaneness, to hazard the opinion that for the majority of mankind a little of mathematics, even, goes a long way. Of course this is quite consistent with their being of immense importance as an instrument to something else; but it is the few who have the aptitude for thus using them, not the bulk of mankind.

The natural sciences do not, however, stand on the same footing with these instrument-knowledges. Ex-

perience shows us that the generality of men will find more interest in learning that, when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, or in learning the explanation of the phenomenon of dew, or in learning how the circulation of the blood is carried on, than they find in learning that the genitive plural of *pais* and *pas* does not take the circumflex on the termination. And one piece of natural knowledge is added to another, and others are added to that, and at last we come to propositions so interesting as Mr. Darwin's famous proposition[1] that "our ancestor was a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits." Or we come to propositions of such reach and magnitude as those which Professor Huxley delivers, when he says that the notions of our forefathers about the beginning and the end of the world were all wrong, and that nature is the expression of a definite order with which nothing interferes.

Interesting, indeed, these results of science are, important they are, and we should all of us be acquainted with them. But what I now wish you to mark is, that we are still, when they are propounded to us and we receive them, we are still in the sphere of intellect and knowledge. And for the generality of men there will be found, I say, to arise, when they have duly taken in the proposition that their ancestor was "a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits," there will be found to arise an invincible desire to relate this proposition to the sense in us for conduct, and to the sense in us for beauty. But this the men of science will not do for us, and will hardly even profess to do. They will give us other pieces of knowledge, other facts, about other animals and their ancestors, or about plants, or

about stones, or about stars; and they may finally bring us to those great "general conceptions of the universe, which are forced upon us all," says Professor Huxley, "by the progress of physical science." But still it will be *knowledge* only which they give us; knowledge not put for us into relation with our sense for conduct, our sense for beauty, and touched with emotion by being so put; not thus put for us, and therefore, to the majority of mankind, after a certain while, unsatisfying, wearying.

Not to the born naturalist, I admit. But what do we mean by a born naturalist? We mean a man in whom the zeal for observing nature is so uncommonly strong and eminent, that it marks him off from the bulk of mankind. Such a man will pass his life happily in collecting natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and will ask for nothing, or hardly anything, more. I have heard it said that the sagacious and admirable naturalist whom we lost not very long ago, Mr. Darwin, once owned to a friend that for his part he did not experience the necessity for two things which most men find so necessary to them, — religion and poetry; science and the domestic affections, he thought, were enough. To a born naturalist, I can well understand that this should seem so. So absorbing is his occupation with nature, so strong his love for his occupation, that he goes on acquiring natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and has little time or inclination for thinking about getting it related to the desire in man for conduct, the desire in man for beauty. He relates it to them for himself as he goes along, so far as he feels the need; and he draws from the domestic affections all the additional solace necessary. But then Darwins are extremely rare. Another great and admirable master of natural knowledge,

Faraday, was a Sandemanian.[1] That is to say, he related his knowledge to his instinct for conduct and to his instinct for beauty, by the aid of that respectable Scottish sectary, Robert Sandeman. And so strong, in general, is the demand of religion and poetry to have their share in a man, to associate themselves with his knowing, and to relieve and rejoice it, that, probably, for one man amongst us with the disposition to do as Darwin did in this respect, there are at least fifty with the disposition to do as Faraday.

Education lays hold upon us, in fact, by satisfying this demand. Professor Huxley holds up to scorn mediæval education, with its neglect of the knowledge of nature, its poverty even of literary studies, its formal logic devoted to "showing how and why that which the Church said was true must be true." But the great mediæval Universities were not brought into being, we may be sure, by the zeal for giving a jejune and contemptible education. Kings have been their nursing fathers, and queens have been their nursing mothers, but not for this. The mediæval Universities came into being, because the supposed knowledge, delivered by Scripture and the Church, so deeply engaged men's hearts, by so simply, easily, and powerfully relating itself to their desire for conduct, their desire for beauty. All other knowledge was dominated by this supposed knowledge and was subordinated to it, because of the surpassing strength of the hold which it gained upon the affections of men, by allying itself profoundly with their sense for conduct, their sense for beauty.

But now, says Professor Huxley, conceptions of the universe fatal to the notions held by our forefathers have been forced upon us by physical science. Grant to him that they are thus fatal, that the new conceptions must and will soon become current everywhere,

and that every one will finally perceive them to be fatal to the beliefs of our forefathers. The need of humane letters, as they are truly called, because they serve the paramount desire in men that good should be forever present to them, — the need of humane letters, to establish a relation between the new conceptions, and our instinct for beauty, our instinct for conduct, is only the more visible. The Middle Age could do without humane letters, as it could do without the study of nature, because its supposed knowledge was made to engage its emotions so powerfully. Grant that the supposed knowledge disappears, its power of being made to engage the emotions will of course disappear along with it, — but the emotions themselves, and their claim to be engaged and satisfied, will remain. Now if we find by experience that humane letters have an undeniable power of engaging the emotions, the importance of humane letters in a man's training becomes not less, but greater, in proportion to the success of modern science in extirpating what it calls "mediæval thinking."

Have humane letters, then, have poetry and eloquence, the power here attributed to them of engaging the emotions, and do they exercise it? And if they have it and exercise it, *how* do they exercise it, so as to exert an influence upon man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? Finally, even if they both can and do exert an influence upon the senses in question, how are they to relate to them the results — the modern results — of natural science? All these questions may be asked. First, have poetry and eloquence the power of calling out the emotions? The appeal is to experience. Experience shows that for the vast majority of men, for mankind in general, they have the power. Next, do they exercise it? They do. But then,

how do they exercise it so as to affect man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? And this is perhaps a case for applying the Preacher's words: "Though a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it."[1] Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say, "Patience is a virtue," and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with Homer,

τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν —[2]

"for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men"? Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with the philosopher Spinoza, *Felicitas in ea consistit quod homo suum esse conservare potest* — "Man's happiness consists in his being able to preserve his own essence," and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with the Gospel, "What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, forfeit himself?"[3] How does this difference of effect arise? I cannot tell, and I am not much concerned to know; the important thing is that it does arise, and that we can profit by it. But how, finally, are poetry and eloquence to exercise the power of relating the modern results of natural science to man's instinct for conduct, his instinct for beauty? And here again I answer that I do not know *how* they will exercise it, but that they can and will exercise it I am sure. I do not mean that modern philosophical poets and modern philosophical moralists are to come and relate for us, in express terms, the results of modern scientific research to our instinct for conduct, our instinct for beauty. But I mean that we shall find, as a matter of experience, if we know the

best that has been thought and uttered in the world, we shall find that the art and poetry and eloquence of men who lived, perhaps, long ago, who had the most limited natural knowledge, who had the most erroneous conceptions about many important matters, we shall find that this art, and poetry, and eloquence, have in fact not only the power of refreshing and delighting us, they have also the power, — such is the strength and worth, in essentials, of their authors' criticism of life, — they have a fortifying, and elevating, and quickening, and suggestive power, capable of wonderfully helping us to relate the results of modern science to our need for conduct, our need for beauty. Homer's conceptions of the physical universe were, I imagine, grotesque ; but really, under the shock of hearing from modern science that " the world is not subordinated to man's use, and that man is not the cynosure of things terrestrial," I could, for my own part, desire no better comfort than Homer's line which I quoted just now,

τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν —

" for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men " !

And the more that men's minds are cleared, the more that the results of science are frankly accepted, the more that poetry and eloquence come to be received and studied as what in truth they really are, — the criticism of life by gifted men, alive and active with extraordinary power at an unusual number of points; — so much the more will the value of humane letters, and of art also, which is an utterance having a like kind of power with theirs, be felt and acknowledged, and their place in education be secured.

Let us, therefore, all of us, avoid indeed as much as

possible any invidious comparison between the merits of humane letters, as means of education, and the merits of the natural sciences. But when some President of a Section for Mechanical Science insists on making the comparison, and tells us that "he who in his training has substituted literature and history for natural science has chosen the less useful alternative," let us make answer to him that the student of humane letters only, will, at least, know also the great general conceptions brought in by modern physical science: for science, as Professor Huxley says, forces them upon us all. But the student of the natural sciences only, will, by our very hypothesis, know nothing of humane letters; not to mention that in setting himself to be perpetually accumulating natural knowledge, he sets himself to do what only specialists have in general the gift for doing genially. And so he will probably be unsatisfied, or at any rate incomplete, and even more incomplete than the student of humane letters only.

I once mentioned in a school-report, how a young man in one of our English training colleges having to paraphrase the passage in *Macbeth* beginning,

"Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?"[1]

turned this line into, "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" And I remarked what a curious state of things it would be, if every pupil of our national schools knew, let us say, that the moon is two thousand one hundred and sixty miles in diameter, and thought at the same time that a good paraphrase for

"Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?"

was, "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" If one is driven to choose, I think I would rather have a young person ignorant about the moon's diameter, but aware

that "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" is bad, than a young person whose education had been such as to manage things the other way.

Or to go higher than the pupils of our national schools. I have in my mind's eye a member of our British Parliament who comes to travel here in America, who afterwards relates his travels, and who shows a really masterly knowledge of the geology of this great country and of its mining capabilities, but who ends by gravely suggesting that the United States should borrow a prince from our Royal Family, and should make him their king, and should create a House of Lords of great landed proprietors after the pattern of ours; and then America, he thinks, would have her future happily and perfectly secured. Surely, in this case, the President of the Section for Mechanical Science would himself hardly say that our member of Parliament, by concentrating himself upon geology and mineralogy, and so on, and not attending to literature and history, had "chosen the more useful alternative."

If then there is to be separation and option between humane letters on the one hand, and the natural sciences on the other, the great majority of mankind, all who have not exceptional and overpowering aptitudes for the study of nature, would do well, I cannot but think, to choose to be educated in humane letters rather than in the natural sciences. Letters will call out their being at more points, will make them live more.

I said that before I ended I would just touch on the question of classical education, and I will keep my word. Even if literature is to retain a large place in our education, yet Latin and Greek, say the friends of progress, will certainly have to go. Greek is the grand

offender in the eyes of these gentlemen. The attackers of the established course of study think that against Greek, at any rate, they have irresistible arguments. Literature may perhaps be needed in education, they say; but why on earth should it be Greek literature? Why not French or German? Nay, "has not an Englishman models in his own literature of every kind of excellence?" As before, it is not on any weak pleadings of my own that I rely for convincing the gainsayers; it is on the constitution of human nature itself, and on the instinct of self-preservation in humanity. The instinct for beauty is set in human nature, as surely as the instinct for knowledge is set there, or the instinct for conduct. If the instinct for beauty is served by Greek literature and art as it is served by no other literature and art, we may trust to the instinct of self-preservation in humanity for keeping Greek as part of our culture. We may trust to it for even making the study of Greek more prevalent than it is now. Greek will come, I hope, some day to be studied more rationally than at present; but it will be increasingly studied as men increasingly feel the need in them for beauty, and how powerfully Greek art and Greek literature can serve this need. Women will again study Greek, as Lady Jane Grey[1] did; I believe that in that chain of forts, with which the fair host of the Amazons are now engirdling our English universities, I find that here in America, in colleges like Smith College in Massachusetts, and Vassar College in the State of New York, and in the happy families of the mixed universities out West, they are studying it already.

Defuit una mihi symmetria prisca, — "The antique symmetry was the one thing wanting to me," said Leonardo da Vinci; and he was an Italian. I will not

presume to speak for the Americans, but I am sure that, in the Englishman, the want of this admirable symmetry of the Greeks is a thousand times more great and crying than in any Italian. The results of the want show themselves most glaringly, perhaps, in our architecture, but they show themselves, also, in all our art. *Fit details strictly combined, in view of a large general result nobly conceived;* that is just the beautiful *symmetria prisca* of the Greeks, and it is just where we English fail, where all our art fails. Striking ideas we have, and well executed details we have; but that high symmetry which, with satisfying and delightful effect, combines them, we seldom or never have. The glorious beauty of the Acropolis at Athens did not come from single fine things stuck about on that hill, a statue here, a gateway there; — no, it arose from all things being perfectly combined for a supreme total effect. What must not an Englishman feel about our deficiencies in this respect, as the sense for beauty, whereof this symmetry is an essential element, awakens and strengthens within him! what will not one day be his respect and desire for Greece and its *symmetria prisca*, when the scales drop from his eyes as he walks the London streets, and he sees such a lesson in meanness, as the Strand, for instance, in its true deformity! But here we are coming to our friend Mr. Ruskin's province, and I will not intrude upon it, for he is its very sufficient guardian.

And so we at last find, it seems, we find flowing in favor of the humanities the natural and necessary stream of things, which seemed against them when we started. The "hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits," this good fellow carried hidden in his nature, apparently, something destined to develop into a necessity for

humane letters. Nay, more; we seem finally to be even led to the further conclusion that our hairy ancestor carried in his nature, also, a necessity for Greek.

And, therefore, to say the truth, I cannot really think that humane letters are in much actual danger of being thrust out from their leading place in education, in spite of the array of authorities against them at this moment. So long as human nature is what it is, their attractions will remain irresistible. As with Greek, so with letters generally: they will some day come, we may hope, to be studied more rationally, but they will not lose their place. What will happen will rather be that there will be crowded into education other matters besides, far too many; there will be, perhaps, a period of unsettlement and confusion and false tendency; but letters will not in the end lose their leading place. If they lose it for a time, they will get it back again. We shall be brought back to them by our wants and aspirations. And a poor humanist may possess his soul in patience, neither strive nor cry, admit the energy and brilliancy of the partisans of physical science, and their present favor with the public, to be far greater than his own, and still have a happy faith that the nature of things works silently on behalf of the studies which he loves, and that, while we shall all have to acquaint ourselves with the great results reached by modern science, and to give ourselves as much training in its disciplines as we can conveniently carry, yet the majority of men will always require humane letters; and so much the more, as they have the more and the greater results of science to relate to the need in man for conduct, and to the need in him for beauty.

II. LITERARY CRITICISM

HEINRICH HEINE[1]

"I KNOW not if I deserve that a laurel-wreath should one day be laid on my coffin. Poetry, dearly as I have loved it, has always been to me but a divine plaything. I have never attached any great value to poetical fame; and I trouble myself very little whether people praise my verses or blame them. But lay on my coffin a *sword;* for I was a brave soldier in the Liberation War of humanity."[2]

Heine had his full share of love of fame, and cared quite as much as his brethren of the *genus irritabile* whether people praised his verses or blamed them. And he was very little of a hero. Posterity will certainly decorate his tomb with the emblem of the laurel rather than with the emblem of the sword. Still, for his contemporaries, for us, for the Europe of the present century, he is significant chiefly for the reason which he himself in the words just quoted assigns. He is significant because he was, if not pre-eminently a brave, yet a brilliant, a most effective soldier in the Liberation War of humanity.

To ascertain the master-current in the literature of an epoch, and to distinguish this from all minor currents, is one of the critic's highest functions; in discharging it he shows how far he possesses the most indispensable quality of his office, — justness of spirit. The living writer who has done most to make England acquainted with German authors, a man of genius, but to whom precisely this one quality of justness of spirit

is perhaps wanting, — I mean Mr. Carlyle, — seems to me in the result of his labors on German literature to afford a proof how very necessary to the critic this quality is. Mr. Carlyle has spoken admirably of Goethe ; but then Goethe stands before all men's eyes, the manifest centre of German literature ; and from this central source many rivers flow. Which of these rivers is the main stream ? which of the courses of spirit which we see active in Goethe is the course which will most influence the future, and attract and be continued by the most powerful of Goethe's successors ? — that is the question. Mr. Carlyle attaches, it seems to me, far too much importance to the romantic school of Germany, — Tieck, Novalis, Jean Paul Richter,[1] — and gives to these writers, really gifted as two, at any rate, of them are, an undue prominence. These writers, and others with aims and a general tendency the same as theirs, are not the real inheritors and continuators of Goethe's power ; the current of their activity is not the main current of German literature after Goethe. Far more in Heine's works flows this main current ; Heine, far more than Tieck or Jean Paul Richter, is the continuator of that which, in Goethe's varied activity, is the most powerful and vital ; on Heine, of all German authors who survived Goethe, incomparably the largest portion of Goethe's mantle fell. I do not forget that when Mr. Carlyle was dealing with German literature, Heine, though he was clearly risen above the horizon, had not shone forth with all his strength ; I do not forget, too, that after ten or twenty years many things may come out plain before the critic which before were hard to be discerned by him ; and assuredly no one would dream of imputing it as a fault to Mr. Carlyle that twenty years ago he mistook the central current in German

literature, overlooked the rising Heine, and attached undue importance to that romantic school which Heine was to destroy; one may rather note it as a misfortune, sent perhaps as a delicate chastisement to a critic, who — man of genius as he is, and no one recognizes his genius more admirably than I do — has, for the functions of the critic, a little too much of the self-will and eccentricity of a genuine son of Great Britain.

Heine is noteworthy, because he is the most important German successor and continuator of Goethe in Goethe's most important line of activity. And which of Goethe's lines of activity is this? — His line of activity as "a soldier in the war of liberation of humanity."

Heine himself would hardly have admitted this affiliation, though he was far too powerful-minded a man to decry, with some of the vulgar German liberals, Goethe's genius. "The wind of the Paris Revolution," he writes after the three days of 1830, "blew about the candles a little in the dark night of Germany, so that the red curtains of a German throne or two caught fire; but the old watchmen, who do the police of the German kingdoms, are already bringing out the fire engines, and will keep the candles closer snuffed for the future. Poor, fast-bound German people, lose not all heart in thy bonds! The fashionable coating of ice melts off from my heart, my soul quivers and my eyes burn, and that is a disadvantageous state of things for a writer, who should control his subject-matter and keep himself beautifully objective, as the artistic school would have us, and as Goethe has done; he has come to be eighty years old doing this, and minister, and in good condition: — poor German people! that is thy greatest man!"[1]

But hear Goethe himself: "If I were to say what

I had really been to the Germans in general, and to the young German poets in particular, I should say I had been their *liberator*."

Modern times find themselves with an immense system of institutions, established facts, accredited dogmas, customs, rules, which have come to them from times not modern. In this system their life has to be carried forward; yet they have a sense that this system is not of their own creation, that it by no means corresponds exactly with the wants of their actual life, that, for them, it is customary, not rational. The awakening of this sense is the awakening of the modern spirit. The modern spirit is now awake almost everywhere; the sense of want of correspondence between the forms of modern Europe and its spirit, between the new wine of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the old bottles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, or even of the sixteenth and seventeenth, almost every one now perceives; it is no longer dangerous to affirm that this want of correspondence exists; people are even beginning to be shy of denying it. To remove this want of correspondence is beginning to be the settled endeavor of most persons of good sense. Dissolvents of the old European system of dominant ideas and facts we must all be, all of us who have any power of working; what we have to study is that we may not be acrid dissolvents of it.

And how did Goethe, that grand dissolvent in an age when there were fewer of them than at present, proceed in his task of dissolution, of liberation of the modern European from the old routine? He shall tell us himself. "Through me the German poets have become aware that, as man must live from within outwards, so the artist must work from within outwards, seeing that, make what contortions he will, he can only

bring to light his own individuality. I can clearly mark where this influence of mine has made itself felt; there arises out of it a kind of poetry of nature, and only in this way is it possible to be original."

My voice shall never be joined to those which decry Goethe, and if it is said that the foregoing is a lame and impotent conclusion to Goethe's declaration that he had been the liberator of the Germans in general, and of the young German poets in particular, I say it is not. Goethe's profound, imperturbable naturalism is absolutely fatal to all routine thinking, he puts the standard, once for all, inside every man instead of outside him; when he is told, such a thing must be so, there is immense authority and custom in favor of its being so, it has been held to be so for a thousand years, he answers with Olympian politeness, "But *is* it so? is it so to *me?*" Nothing could be more really subversive of the foundations on which the old European order rested; and it may be remarked that no persons are so radically detached from this order, no persons so thoroughly modern, as those who have felt Goethe's influence most deeply. If it is said that Goethe professes to have in this way deeply influenced but a few persons, and those persons poets, one may answer that he could have taken no better way to secure, in the end, the ear of the world; for poetry is simply the most beautiful, impressive, and widely effective mode of saying things, and hence its importance. Nevertheless the process of liberation, as Goethe worked it, though sure, is undoubtedly slow; he came, as Heine says, to be eighty years old in thus working it, and at the end of that time the old Middle-Age machine was still creaking on, the thirty German courts and their chamberlains subsisted in all their glory; Goethe himself was a minister, and the visible

triumph of the modern spirit over prescription and routine seemed as far off as ever. It was the year 1830 ; the German sovereigns had passed the preceding fifteen years in breaking the promises of freedom they had made to their subjects when they wanted their help in the final struggle with Napoleon. Great events were happening in France ; the revolution, defeated in 1815, had arisen from its defeat, and was wresting from its adversaries the power. Heinrich Heine, a young man of genius, born at Hamburg,[1] and with all the culture of Germany, but by race a Jew ; with warm sympathies for France, whose revolution had given to his race the rights of citizenship, and whose rule had been, as is well known, popular in the Rhine provinces, where he passed his youth ; with a passionate admiration for the great French Emperor, with a passionate contempt for the sovereigns who had overthrown him, for their agents, and for their policy, — Heinrich Heine was in 1830 in no humor for any such gradual process of liberation from the old order of things as that which Goethe had followed. His counsel was for open war. Taking that terrible modern weapon, the pen, in his hand, he passed the remainder of his life in one fierce battle. What was that battle? the reader will ask. It was a life and death battle with Philistinism.

Philistinism![2] — we have not the expression in English. Perhaps we have not the word because we have so much of the thing. At Soli, I imagine, they did not talk of solecisms ;[3] and here, at the very headquarters of Goliath, nobody talks of Philistinism. The French have adopted the term *épicier* (grocer), to designate the sort of being whom the Germans designate by the Philistine; but the French term — besides that it casts a slur upon a respectable class,

composed of living and susceptible members, while the original Philistines are dead and buried long ago — is really, I think, in itself much less apt and expressive than the German term. Efforts have been made to obtain in English some term equivalent to *Philister* or *épicier;* Mr. Carlyle has made several such efforts: "respectability with its thousand gigs,"[1] he says; — well, the occupant of every one of these gigs is, Mr. Carlyle means, a Philistine. However, the word *respectable* is far too valuable a word to be thus perverted from its proper meaning; if the English are ever to have a word for the thing we are speaking of, — and so prodigious are the changes which the modern spirit is introducing, that even we English shall perhaps one day come to want such a word, — I think we had much better take the term *Philistine* itself.

Philistine must have originally meant, in the mind of those who invented the nickname, a strong, dogged, unenlightened opponent of the chosen people, of the children of the light. The party of change, the would-be remodellers of the old traditional European order, the invokers of reason against custom, the representatives of the modern spirit in every sphere where it is applicable, regarded themselves, with the robust self-confidence natural to reformers as a chosen people, as children of the light. They regarded their adversaries as humdrum people, slaves to routine, enemies to light; stupid and oppressive, but at the same time very strong. This explains the love which Heine, that Paladin of the modern spirit, has for France; it explains the preference which he gives to France over Germany: "The French," he says, "are the chosen people of the new religion, its first gospels and dogmas have been drawn up in their language; Paris is the new Jerusalem, and the Rhine is the Jordan which divides

the consecrated land of freedom from the land of the Philistines."[1] He means that the French, as a people, have shown more accessibility to ideas than any other people; that prescription and routine have had less hold upon them than upon any other people; that they have shown most readiness to move and to alter at the bidding (real or supposed) of reason. This explains, too, the detestation which Heine had for the English: "I might settle in England," he says, in his exile, "if it were not that I should find there two things, coal-smoke and Englishmen; I cannot abide either." What he hated in the English was the "ächtbrittische Beschränktheit," as he calls it, — the *genuine British narrowness*. In truth, the English, profoundly as they have modified the old Middle-Age order, great as is the liberty which they have secured for themselves, have in all their changes proceeded, to use a familiar expression, by the rule of thumb; what was intolerably inconvenient to them they have suppressed, and as they have suppressed it, not because it was irrational, but because it was practically inconvenient, they have seldom in suppressing it appealed to reason, but always, if possible, to some precedent, or form, or letter, which served as a convenient instrument for their purpose, and which saved them from the necessity of recurring to general principles. They have thus become, in a certain sense, of all people the most inaccessible to ideas and the most impatient of them; inaccessible to them, because of their want of familiarity with them; and impatient of them because they have got on so well without them, that they despise those who, not having got on as well as themselves, still make a fuss for what they themselves have done so well without. But there has certainly followed from hence, in this country, somewhat of a general depression of pure

intelligence: Philistia has come to be thought by us the true Land of Promise, and it is anything but that; the born lover of ideas, the born hater of commonplaces, must feel in this country, that the sky over his head is of brass and iron. The enthusiast for the idea, for reason, values reason, the idea, in and for themselves; he values them, irrespectively of the practical conveniences which their triumph may obtain for him; and the man who regards the possession of these practical conveniences as something sufficient in itself, something which compensates for the absence or surrender of the idea, of reason, is, in his eyes, a Philistine. This is why Heine so often and so mercilessly attacks the liberals; much as he hates conservatism he hates Philistinism even more, and whoever attacks conservatism itself ignobly, not as a child of light, not in the name of the idea, is a Philistine. Our Cobbett[1] is thus for him, much as he disliked our clergy and aristocracy whom Cobbett attacked, a Philistine with six fingers on every hand and on every foot six toes, four-and-twenty in number: a Philistine, the staff of whose spear is like a weaver's beam. Thus he speaks of him: —

"While I translate Cobbett's words, the man himself comes bodily before my mind's eye, as I saw him at that uproarious dinner at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, with his scolding red face and his radical laugh, in which venomous hate mingles with a mocking exultation at his enemies' surely approaching downfall. He is a chained cur, who falls with equal fury on every one whom he does not know, often bites the best friend of the house in his calves, barks incessantly, and just because of this incessantness of his barking cannot get listened to, even when he barks at a real thief. Therefore the distinguished thieves who plunder

England do not think it necessary to throw the growling Cobbett a bone to stop his mouth. This makes the dog furiously savage, and he shows all his hungry teeth. Poor old Cobbett! England's dog! I have no love for thee, for every vulgar nature my soul abhors; but thou touchest me to the inmost soul with pity, as I see how thou strainest in vain to break loose and to get at those thieves, who make off with their booty before thy very eyes, and mock at thy fruitless springs and thine impotent howling." [1]

There is balm in Philistia as well as in Gilead. A chosen circle of children of the modern spirit, perfectly emancipated from prejudice and commonplace, regarding the ideal side of things in all its efforts for change, passionately despising half-measures and condescension to human folly and obstinacy, — with a bewildered, timid, torpid multitude behind, — conducts a country to the government of Herr von Bismarck. A nation regarding the practical side of things in its efforts for change, attacking not what is irrational, but what is pressingly inconvenient, and attacking this as one body, "moving altogether if it move at all," [2] and treating children of light like the very harshest of stepmothers, comes to the prosperity and liberty of modern England. For all that, however, Philistia (let me say it again) is not the true promised land, as we English commonly imagine it to be; and our excessive neglect of the idea, and consequent inaptitude for it, threatens us, at a moment when the idea is beginning to exercise a real power in human society, with serious future inconvenience, and, in the meanwhile, cuts us off from the sympathy of other nations, which feel its power more than we do.

But, in 1830, Heine very soon found that the fire-engines of the German governments were too much

for his direct efforts at incendiarism. "What demon drove me," he cries, "to write my *Reisebilder*, to edit a newspaper, to plague myself with our time and its interests, to try and shake the poor German Hodge out of his thousand years' sleep in his hole? What good did I get by it? Hodge opened his eyes, only to shut them again immediately; he yawned, only to begin snoring again the next minute louder than ever; he stretched his stiff ungainly limbs, only to sink down again directly afterwards, and lie like a dead man in the old bed of his accustomed habits. I must have rest; but where am I to find a resting-place? In Germany I can no longer stay."

This is Heine's jesting account of his own efforts to rouse Germany: now for his pathetic account of them; it is because he unites so much wit with so much pathos that he is so effective a writer:—

"The Emperor Charles the Fifth[1] sate in sore straits, in the Tyrol, encompassed by his enemies. All his knights and courtiers had forsaken him; not one came to his help. I know not if he had at that time the cheese face with which Holbein has painted him for us. But I am sure that under lip of his, with its contempt for mankind, stuck out even more than it does in his portraits. How could he but contemn the tribe which in the sunshine of his prosperity had fawned on him so devotedly, and now, in his dark distress, left him all alone? Then suddenly his door opened, and there came in a man in disguise, and, as he threw back his cloak, the Kaiser recognized in him his faithful Conrad von der Rosen, the court jester. This man brought him comfort and counsel, and he was the court jester!

"'O German fatherland! dear German people! I am thy Conrad von der Rosen. The man whose proper

business was to amuse thee, and who in good times should have catered only for thy mirth, makes his way into thy prison in time of need; here, under my cloak, I bring thee thy sceptre and crown; dost thou not recognize me, my Kaiser? If I cannot free thee, I will at least comfort thee, and thou shalt at least have one with thee who will prattle with thee about thy sorest affliction, and whisper courage to thee, and love thee, and whose best joke and best blood shall be at thy service. For thou, my people, art the true Kaiser, the true lord of the land; thy will is sovereign, and more legitimate far than that purple *Tel est notre plaisir*, which invokes a divine right with no better warrant than the anointings of shaven and shorn jugglers; thy will, my people, is the sole rightful source of power. Though now thou liest down in thy bonds, yet in the end will thy rightful cause prevail; the day of deliverance is at hand, a new time is beginning. My Kaiser, the night is over, and out there glows the ruddy dawn.'

"'Conrad von der Rosen, my fool, thou art mistaken; perhaps thou takest a headsman's gleaming axe for the sun, and the red of dawn is only blood.'

"'No, my Kaiser, it is the sun, though it is rising in the west; these six thousand years it has always risen in the east; it is high time there should come a change.'

"'Conrad von der Rosen, my fool, thou hast lost the bells out of thy red cap, and it has now such an odd look, that red cap of thine!'

"'Ah, my Kaiser, thy distress has made me shake my head so hard and fierce, that the fool's bells have dropped off my cap; the cap is none the worse for that.'

"'Conrad von der Rosen, my fool, what is that noise of breaking and cracking outside there?'

"'Hush! that is the saw and the carpenter's axe, and soon the doors of thy prison will be burst open, and thou wilt be free, my Kaiser!'

"'Am I then really Kaiser? Ah, I forgot, it is the fool who tells me so!'

"'Oh, sigh not, my dear master, the air of thy prison makes thee so desponding! when once thou hast got thy rights again, thou wilt feel once more the bold imperial blood in thy veins, and thou wilt be proud like a Kaiser, and violent, and gracious, and unjust, and smiling, and ungrateful, as princes are.'

"'Conrad von der Rosen, my fool, when I am free, what wilt thou do then?'

"'I will then sew new bells on to my cap.'

"'And how shall I recompense thy fidelity?'

"'Ah, dear master, by not leaving me to die in a ditch!'"[1]

I wish to mark Heine's place in modern European literature, the scope of his activity, and his value. I cannot attempt to give here a detailed account of his life, or a description of his separate works. In May 1831 he went over his Jordan, the Rhine, and fixed himself in his new Jerusalem, Paris. There, henceforward, he lived, going in general to some French watering-place in the summer, but making only one or two short visits to Germany during the rest of his life. His works, in verse and prose, succeeded each other without stopping; a collected edition of them, filling seven closely-printed octavo volumes, has been published in America;[2] in the collected editions of few people's works is there so little to skip. Those who wish for a single good specimen of him should read his first important work, the work which made his reputation, the *Reisebilder*, or "Travelling Sketches": prose and verse, wit and seriousness, are mingled in it, and

the mingling of these is characteristic of Heine, and is nowhere to be seen practised more naturally and happily than in his *Reisebilder*. In 1847 his health, which till then had always been perfectly good, gave way. He had a kind of paralytic stroke. His malady proved to be a softening of the spinal marrow: it was incurable; it made rapid progress. In May 1848, not a year after his first attack, he went out of doors for the last time; but his disease took more than eight years to kill him. For nearly eight years he lay helpless on a couch, with the use of his limbs gone, wasted almost to the proportions of a child, wasted so that a woman could carry him about; the sight of one eye lost, that of the other greatly dimmed, and requiring, that it might be exercised, to have the palsied eyelid lifted and held up by the finger; all this, and besides this, suffering at short intervals paroxysms of nervous agony. I have said he was not preëminently brave; but in the astonishing force of spirit with which he retained his activity of mind, even his gayety, amid all his suffering, and went on composing with undiminished fire to the last, he was truly brave. Nothing could clog that aërial lightness. "Pouvez-vous siffler?" his doctor asked him one day, when he was almost at his last gasp;—"siffler," as every one knows, has the double meaning of *to whistle* and *to hiss:*—"Hélas! non," was his whispered answer; "pas même une comédie de M. Scribe!" M. Scribe [1] is, or was, the favorite dramatist of the French Philistine. "My nerves," he said to some one who asked him about them in 1855, the year of the great Exhibition in Paris, "my nerves are of that quite singularly remarkable miserableness of nature, that I am convinced they would get at the Exhibition the grand medal for pain and misery." He read all the medical books which treated of his complaint.

"But," said he to some one who found him thus engaged, "what good this reading is to do me I don't know, except that it will qualify me to give lectures in heaven on the ignorance of doctors on earth about diseases of the spinal marrow." What a matter of grim seriousness are our own ailments to most of us! yet with this gayety Heine treated his to the end. That end, so long in coming, came at last. Heine died on the 17th of February, 1856, at the age of fifty-eight. By his will he forbade that his remains should be transported to Germany. He lies buried in the cemetery of Montmartre, at Paris.

His direct political action was null, and this is neither to be wondered at nor regretted; direct political action is not the true function of literature, and Heine was a born man of letters. Even in his favorite France the turn taken by public affairs was not at all what he wished, though he read French politics by no means as we in England, most of us, read them. He thought things were tending there to the triumph of communism; and to a champion of the idea like Heine, what there is gross and narrow in communism was very repulsive. "It is all of no use," he cried on his death-bed, "the future belongs to our enemies, the Communists, and Louis Napoleon[1] is their John the Baptist." "And yet," — he added with all his old love for that remarkable entity, so full of attraction for him, so profoundly unknown in England, the French people, —"do not believe that God lets all this go forward merely as a grand comedy. Even though the Communists deny him to-day, he knows better than they do, that a time will come when they will learn to believe in him." After 1831, his hopes of soon upsetting the German Governments had died away, and his propagandism took another, a more truly literary, character.

It took the character of an intrepid application of the modern spirit to literature. To the ideas with which the burning questions of modern life filled him, he made all his subject-matter minister. He touched all the great points in the career of the human race, and here he but followed the tendency of the wide culture of Germany; but he touched them with a wand which brought them all under a light where the modern eye cares most to see them, and here he gave a lesson to the culture of Germany, — so wide, so impartial, that it is apt to become slack and powerless, and to lose itself in its materials for want of a strong central idea round which to group all its other ideas. So the mystic and romantic school of Germany lost itself in the Middle Ages, was overpowered by their influence, came to ruin by its vain dreams of renewing them. Heine, with a far profounder sense of the mystic and romantic charm of the Middle Age than Gœrres, or Brentano, or Arnim,[1] Heine the chief romantic poet of Germany, is yet also much more than a romantic poet: he is a great modern poet, he is not conquered by the Middle Age, he has a talisman by which he can feel — along with but above the power of the fascinating Middle Age itself — the power of modern ideas.

A French critic of Heine thinks he has said enough in saying that Heine proclaimed in German countries, with beat of drum, the ideas of 1789, and that at the cheerful noise of his drum the ghosts of the Middle Age took to flight. But this is rather too French an account of the matter. Germany, that vast mine of ideas, had no need to import ideas, as such, from any foreign country; and if Heine had carried ideas, as such, from France into Germany, he would but have been carrying coals to Newcastle. But that for which France, far less meditative than Germany, is eminent,

is the prompt, ardent, and practical application of an idea, when she seizes it, in all departments of human activity which admit it. And that in which Germany most fails, and by failing in which she appears so helpless and impotent, is just the practical application of her innumerable ideas. "When Candide," says Heine himself, "came to Eldorado, he saw in the streets a number of boys who were playing with gold-nuggets instead of marbles. This degree of luxury made him imagine that they must be the king's children, and he was not a little astonished when he found that in Eldorado gold-nuggets are of no more value than marbles are with us, and that the schoolboys play with them. A similar thing happened to a friend of mine, a foreigner, when he came to Germany and first read German books. He was perfectly astounded at the wealth of ideas which he found in them; but he soon remarked that ideas in Germany are as plentiful as gold-nuggets in Eldorado, and that those writers whom he had taken for intellectual princes, were in reality only common schoolboys."[1] Heine was, as he calls himself, a "Child of the French Revolution," an "Initiator," because he vigorously assured the Germans that ideas were not counters or marbles, to be played with for their own sake; because he exhibited in literature modern ideas applied with the utmost freedom, clearness, and originality. And therefore he declared that the great task of his life had been the endeavor to establish a cordial relation between France and Germany. It is because he thus operates a junction between the French spirit and German ideas and German culture, that he founds something new, opens a fresh period, and deserves the attention of criticism far more than the German poets his contemporaries, who merely continue an old period till it expires. It

may be predicted that in the literature of other countries, too, the French spirit is destined to make its influence felt, — as an element, in alliance with the native spirit, of novelty and movement, — as it has made its influence felt in German literature; fifty years hence a critic will be demonstrating to our grandchildren how this phenomenon has come to pass.

We in England, in our great burst of literature during the first thirty years of the present century, had no manifestation of the modern spirit, as this spirit manifests itself in Goethe's works or Heine's. And the reason is not far to seek. We had neither the German wealth of ideas, nor the French enthusiasm for applying ideas. There reigned in the mass of the nation that inveterate inaccessibility to ideas, that Philistinism, — to use the German nickname, — which reacts even on the individual genius that is exempt from it. In our greatest literary epoch, that of the Elizabethan age,[1] English society at large was accessible to ideas, was permeated by them, was vivified by them, to a degree which has never been reached in England since. Hence the unique greatness in English literature of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. They were powerfully upheld by the intellectual life of their nation; they applied freely in literature the then modern ideas, — the ideas of the Renascence and the Reformation. A few years afterwards the great English middle class, the kernel of the nation, the class whose intelligent sympathy had upheld a Shakespeare, entered the prison of Puritanism, and had the key turned on its spirit there for two hundred years. *He enlargeth a nation*, says Job, *and straiteneth it again*.[2]

In the literary movement of the beginning of the nineteenth century the signal attempt to apply freely the modern spirit was made in England by two mem-

bers of the aristocratic class, Byron and Shelley. Aristocracies are, as such, naturally impenetrable by ideas; but their individual members have a high courage and a turn for breaking bounds; and a man of genius, who is the born child of the idea, happening to be born in the aristocratic ranks, chafes against the obstacles which prevent him from freely developing it. But Byron and Shelley did not succeed in their attempt freely to apply the modern spirit in English literature; they could not succeed in it; the resistance to baffle them, the want of intelligent sympathy to guide and uphold them, were too great. Their literary creation, compared with the literary creation of Shakespeare and Spenser, compared with the literary creation of Goethe and Heine, is a failure. The best literary creation of that time in England proceeded from men who did not make the same bold attempt as Byron and Shelley. What, in fact, was the career of the chief English men of letters, their contemporaries? The gravest of them, Wordsworth, retired (in Middle-Age phrase) into a monastery. I mean, he plunged himself in the inward life, he voluntarily cut himself off from the modern spirit. Coleridge took to opium. Scott became the historiographer-royal of feudalism. Keats passionately gave himself up to a sensuous genius, to his faculty for interpreting nature; and he died of consumption at twenty-five. Wordsworth, Scott, and Keats have left admirable works; far more solid and complete works than those which Byron and Shelley have left. But their works have this defect, — they do not belong to that which is the main current of the literature of modern epochs, they do not apply modern ideas to life; they constitute, therefore, *minor currents*, and all other literary work of our day, however popular, which has the same defect, also constitutes but

a minor current. Byron and Shelley will long be remembered, long after the inadequacy of their actual work is clearly recognized, for their passionate, their Titanic effort to flow in the main stream of modern literature; their names will be greater than their writings; *stat magni nominis umbra.*[1]

Heine's literary good fortune was superior to that of Byron and Shelley. His theatre of operations was Germany, whose Philistinism does not consist in her want of ideas, or in her inaccessibility to ideas, for she teems with them and loves them, but, as I have said, in her feeble and hesitating application of modern ideas to life. Heine's intense modernism, his absolute freedom, his utter rejection of stock classicism and stock romanticism, his bringing all things under the point of view of the nineteenth century, were understood and laid to heart by Germany, through virtue of her immense, tolerant intellectualism, much as there was in all Heine said to affront and wound Germany. The wit and ardent modern spirit of France Heine joined to the culture, the sentiment, the thought of Germany. This is what makes him so remarkable: his wonderful clearness, lightness, and freedom, united with such power of feeling, and width of range. Is there anywhere keener wit than in his story of the French abbé who was his tutor, and who wanted to get from him that *la religion* is French for *der Glaube:* "Six times did he ask me the question: 'Henry, what is *der Glaube* in French?' and six times, and each time with a greater burst of tears, did I answer him — 'It is *le crédit.*' And at the seventh time, his face purple with rage, the infuriated questioner screamed out: 'It is *la religion*'; and a rain of cuffs descended upon me, and all the other boys burst out laughing. Since that day I have never

been able to hear *la religion* mentioned, without feeling a tremor run through my back, and my cheeks grow red with shame."[1] Or in that comment on the fate of Professor Saalfeld, who had been addicted to writing furious pamphlets against Napoleon, and who was a professor at Göttingen, a great seat, according to Heine, of pedantry and Philistinism. "It is curious," says Heine, "the three greatest adversaries of Napoleon have all of them ended miserably. Castlereagh[2] cut his own throat; Louis the Eighteenth rotted upon his throne; and Professor Saalfeld is still a professor at Göttingen."[3] It is impossible to go beyond that.

What wit, again, in that saying which every one has heard: "The Englishman loves liberty like his lawful wife, the Frenchman loves her like his mistress, the German loves her like his old grandmother." But the turn Heine gives to this incomparable saying is not so well known; and it is by that turn he shows himself the born poet he is, — full of delicacy and tenderness, of inexhaustible resource, infinitely new and striking: —

"And yet, after all, no one can ever tell how things may turn out. The grumpy Englishman, in an ill-temper with his wife, is capable of some day putting a rope round her neck, and taking her to be sold at Smithfield. The inconstant Frenchman may become unfaithful to his adored mistress, and be seen fluttering about the Palais Royal after another. *But the German will never quite abandon his old grandmother;* he will always keep for her a nook by the chimney-corner, where she can tell her fairy stories to the listening children."[4]

Is it possible to touch more delicately and happily both the weakness and the strength of Germany; —

pedantic, simple, enslaved, free, ridiculous, admirable Germany?

And Heine's verse, — his *Lieder?* Oh, the comfort, after dealing with French people of genius, irresistibly impelled to try and express themselves in verse, launching out into a deep which destiny has sown with so many rocks for them, — the comfort of coming to a man of genius, who finds in verse his freest and most perfect expression, whose voyage over the deep of poetry destiny makes smooth! After the rhythm, to us, at any rate, with the German paste in our composition, so deeply unsatisfying, of —

> "Ah! que me dites-vous, et que vous dit mon âme?
> Que dit le ciel à l'aube et la flamme à la flamme?"

what a blessing to arrive at rhythms like —

> "Take, oh, take those lips away,
> That so sweetly were forsworn —"[1]

or —

> "Siehst sehr sterbeblässlich aus,
> Doch getrost! du bist zu Haus —"[2]

in which one's soul can take pleasure! The magic of Heine's poetical form is incomparable; he chiefly uses a form of old German popular poetry, a ballad-form which has more rapidity and grace than any ballad-form of ours; he employs this form with the most exquisite lightness and ease, and yet it has at the same time the inborn fulness, pathos, and old-world charm of all true forms of popular poetry. Thus in Heine's poetry, too, one perpetually blends the impression of French modernism and clearness, with that of German sentiment and fulness; and to give this blended impression is, as I have said, Heine's great characteristic. To feel it, one must read him; he gives it in his form as well as in his contents, and by translation I can only reproduce it so far as his contents give it. But even the contents

of many of his poems are capable of giving a certain sense of it. Here, for instance, is a poem in which he makes his profession of faith to an innocent beautiful soul, a sort of Gretchen, the child of some simple mining people having their hut among the pines at the foot of the Hartz Mountains, who reproaches him with not holding the old articles of the Christian creed: —

"Ah, my child, while I was yet a little boy, while I yet sate upon my mother's knee, I believed in God the Father, who rules up there in Heaven, good and great;

"Who created the beautiful earth, and the beautiful men and women thereon; who ordained for sun, moon, and stars their courses.

"When I got bigger, my child, I comprehended yet a great deal more than this, and comprehended, and grew intelligent; and I believe on the Son also;

"On the beloved Son, who loved us, and revealed love to us; and, for his reward, as always happens, was crucified by the people.

"Now, when I am grown up, have read much, have travelled much, my heart swells within me, and with my whole heart I believe on the Holy Ghost.

"The greatest miracles were of his working, and still greater miracles doth he even now work; he burst in sunder the oppressor's stronghold, and he burst in sunder the bondsman's yoke.

"He heals old death-wounds, and renews the old right; all mankind are one race of noble equals before him.

"He chases away the evil clouds and the dark cobwebs of the brain, which have spoilt love and joy for us, which day and night have loured on us.

"A thousand knights, well harnessed, has the Holy

Ghost chosen out to fulfil his will, and he has put courage into their souls.

"Their good swords flash, their bright banners wave; what, thou wouldst give much, my child, to look upon such gallant knights?

"Well, on me, my child, look! kiss me, and look boldly upon me! one of those knights of the Holy Ghost am I."[1]

One has only to turn over the pages of his *Romanzero*,[2] — a collection of poems written in the first years of his illness, with his whole power and charm still in them, and not, like his latest poems of all, painfully touched by the air of his *Matrazzen-gruft*, his "mattress-grave," — to see Heine's width of range; the most varied figures succeed one another, — Rhampsinitus,[3] Edith with the Swan Neck,[4] Charles the First, Marie Antoinette, King David, a heroine of *Mabille*, Melisanda of Tripoli,[5] Richard Cœur de Lion, Pedro the Cruel,[6] Firdusi,[7] Cortes, Dr. Döllinger;[8] — but never does Heine attempt to be *hübsch objectiv*, "beautifully objective," to become in spirit an old Egyptian, or an old Hebrew, or a Middle-Age knight, or a Spanish adventurer, or an English royalist; he always remains Heinrich Heine, a son of the nineteenth century. To give a notion of his tone, I will quote a few stanzas at the end of the *Spanish Atridæ*,[9] in which he describes, in the character of a visitor at the court of Henry of Transtamare[10] at Segovia, Henry's treatment of the children of his brother, Pedro the Cruel. Don Diego Albuquerque, his neighbor, strolls after dinner through the castle with him:—

"In the cloister-passage, which leads to the kennels where are kept the king's hounds, that with their growling and yelping let you know a long way off where they are,

"There I saw, built into the wall, and with a strong iron grating for its outer face, a cell like a cage.

"Two human figures sate therein, two young boys; chained by the leg, they crouched in the dirty straw.

"Hardly twelve years old seemed the one, the other not much older; their faces fair and noble, but pale and wan with sickness.

"They were all in rags, almost naked; and their lean bodies showed wounds, the marks of ill-usage; both of them shivered with fever.

"They looked up at me out of the depth of their misery; 'Who,' I cried in horror to Don Diego, 'are these pictures of wretchedness?'

"Don Diego seemed embarrassed; he looked round to see that no one was listening; then he gave a deep sigh; and at last, putting on the easy tone of a man of the world, he said:—

"'These are a pair of king's sons, who were early left orphans; the name of their father was King Pedro, the name of their mother, Maria de Padilla.

"'After the great battle of Navarette, when Henry of Transtamare had relieved his brother, King Pedro, of the troublesome burden of the crown,

"'And likewise of that still more troublesome burden, which is called life, then Don Henry's victorious magnanimity had to deal with his brother's children.

"'He has adopted them, as an uncle should; and he has given them free quarters in his own castle.

"'The room which he has assigned to them is certainly rather small, but then it is cool in summer, and not intolerably cold in winter.

"'Their fare is rye-bread, which tastes as sweet as if the goddess Ceres had baked it express for her beloved Proserpine.

"'Not unfrequently, too, he sends a scullion to

them with garbanzos,[1] and then the young gentlemen know that it is Sunday in Spain.

"'But it is not Sunday every day, and garbanzos do not come every day; and the master of the hounds gives them the treat of his whip.

"'For the master of the hounds, who has under his superintendence the kennels and the pack, and the nephews' cage also,

"'Is the unfortunate husband of that lemon-faced woman with the white ruff, whom we remarked to-day at dinner.

"'And she scolds so sharp, that often her husband snatches his whip, and rushes down here, and gives it to the dogs and to the poor little boys.

"'But his majesty has expressed his disapproval of such proceedings, and has given orders that for the future his nephews are to be treated differently from the dogs.

"'He has determined no longer to entrust the disciplining of his nephews to a mercenary stranger, but to carry it out with his own hands.'

"Don Diego stopped abruptly; for the seneschal of the castle joined us, and politely expressed his hope that we had dined to our satisfaction."

Observe how the irony of the whole of that, finishing with the grim innuendo of the last stanza but one, is at once truly masterly and truly modern.

No account of Heine is complete which does not notice the Jewish element in him. His race he treated with the same freedom with which he treated everything else, but he derived a great force from it, and no one knew this better than he himself. He has excellently pointed out how in the sixteenth century there was a double renascence, — a Hellenic renascence and a Hebrew renascence — and how both have been

great powers ever since. He himself had in him both the spirit of Greece and the spirit of Judæa; both these spirits reach the infinite, which is the true goal of all poetry and all art, — the Greek spirit by beauty, the Hebrew spirit by sublimity. By his perfection of literary form, by his love of clearness, by his love of beauty, Heine is Greek; by his intensity, by his untamableness, by his "longing which cannot be uttered," [1] he is Hebrew. Yet what Hebrew ever treated the things of the Hebrews like this? —

"There lives at Hamburg, in a one-roomed lodging in the Baker's Broad Walk, a man whose name is Moses Lump; all the week he goes about in wind and rain, with his pack on his back, to earn his few shillings; but when on Friday evening he comes home, he finds the candlestick with seven candles lighted, and the table covered with a fair white cloth, and he puts away from him his pack and his cares, and he sits down to table with his squinting wife and yet more squinting daughter, and eats fish with them, fish which has been dressed in beautiful white garlic sauce, sings therewith the grandest psalms of King David, rejoices with his whole heart over the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, rejoices, too, that all the wicked ones who have done the children of Israel hurt, have ended by taking themselves off; that King Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Haman, Antiochus, Titus, and all such people, are well dead, while he, Moses Lump, is yet alive, and eating fish with wife and daughter; and I can tell you, Doctor, the fish is delicate and the man is happy, he has no call to torment himself about culture, he sits contented in his religion and in his green bedgown, like Diogenes in his tub, he contemplates with satisfaction his candles, which he on no account will snuff for himself; and I can tell you, if the can-

dles burn a little dim, and the snuffers-woman, whose business it is to snuff them, is not at hand, and Rothschild the Great were at that moment to come in, with all his brokers, bill discounters, agents, and chief clerks, with whom he conquers the world, and Rothschild were to say: 'Moses Lump, ask of me what favor you will, and it shall be granted you';— Doctor, I am convinced, Moses Lump would quietly answer: 'Snuff me those candles!' and Rothschild the Great would exclaim with admiration: 'If I were not Rothschild, I would be Moses Lump.'" [1]

There Heine shows us his own people by its comic side; in the poem of the *Princess Sabbath* [2] he shows it to us by a more serious side. The Princess Sabbath, "the *tranquil Princess*, pearl and flower of all beauty, fair as the Queen of Sheba, Solomon's bosom friend, that blue stocking from Ethiopia, who wanted to shine by her *esprit*, and with her wise riddles made herself in the long run a bore" (with Heine the sarcastic turn is never far off), this princess has for her betrothed a prince whom sorcery has transformed into an animal of lower race, the Prince Israel.

"A dog with the desires of a dog, he wallows all the week long in the filth and refuse of life, amidst the jeers of the boys in the street.

"But every Friday evening, at the twilight hour, suddenly the magic passes off, and the dog becomes once more a human being.

"A man with the feelings of a man, with head and heart raised aloft, in festal garb, in almost clean garb, he enters the halls of his Father.

"Hail, beloved halls of my royal Father! Ye tents of Jacob, I kiss with my lips your holy door-posts!"

Still more he shows us this serious side in his beautiful poem on Jehuda ben Halevy,[2] a poet belonging

to "the great golden age of the Arabian, Old-Spanish, Jewish school of poets," a contemporary of the troubadours: —

"He, too, — the hero whom we sing, — Jehuda ben Halevy, too, had his lady-love; but she was of a special sort.

"She was no Laura,[1] whose eyes, mortal stars, in the cathedral on Good Friday kindled that world-renowned flame.

"She was no châtelainè, who in the blooming glory of her youth presided at tourneys, and awarded the victor's crown.

"No casuistess in the Gay Science was she, no lady *doctrinaire*, who delivered her oracles in the judgment-chamber of a Court of Love.[2]

"She, whom the Rabbi loved, was a woe-begone poor darling, a mourning picture of desolation . . . and her name was Jerusalem."

Jehuda ben Halevy, like the Crusaders, makes his pilgrimage to Jerusalem; and there, amid the ruins, sings a song of Sion which has become famous among his people: —

"That lay of pearled tears is the wide-famed Lament, which is sung in all the scattered tents of Jacob throughout the world.

"On the ninth day of the month which is called Ab, on the anniversary of Jerusalem's destruction by Titus Vespasianus.

"Yes, that is the song of Sion, which Jehuda ben Halevy sang with his dying breath amid the holy ruins of Jerusalem.

"Barefoot, and in penitential weeds, he sat there upon the fragment of a fallen column; down to his breast fell,

"Like a gray forest, his hair; and cast a weird

shadow on the face which looked out through it, — his troubled pale face, with the spiritual eyes.

"So he sat and sang, like unto a seer out of the foretime to look upon; Jeremiah, the Ancient, seemed to have risen out of his grave.

"But a bold Saracen came riding that way, aloft on his barb, lolling in his saddle, and brandishing a naked javelin;

"Into the breast of the poor singer he plunged his deadly shaft, and shot away like a winged shadow.

"Quietly flowed the Rabbi's life-blood, quietly he sang his song to an end; and his last dying sigh was Jerusalem!"

But, most of all, Heine shows us this side in a strange poem describing a public dispute, before King Pedro and his Court, between a Jewish and a Christian champion, on the merits of their respective faiths. In the strain of the Jew all the fierceness of the old Hebrew genius, all its rigid defiant Monotheism, appear: —

"Our God has not died like a poor innocent lamb for mankind; he is no gushing philanthropist, no declaimer.

"Our God is not love, caressing is not his line; but he is a God of thunder, and he is a God of revenge.

"The lightnings of his wrath strike inexorably every sinner, and the sins of the fathers are often visited upon their remote posterity.

"Our God, he is alive, and in his hall of heaven he goes on existing away, throughout all the eternities.

"Our God, too, is a God in robust health, no myth, pale and thin as sacrificial wafers, or as shadows by Cocytus.

"Our God is strong. In his hand he upholds sun,

moon, and stars; thrones break, nations reel to and fro, when he knits his forehead.

"Our God loves music, the voice of the harp and the song of feasting; but the sound of church-bells he hates, as he hates the grunting of pigs." [1]

Nor must Heine's sweetest note be unheard, — his plaintive note, his note of melancholy. Here is a strain which came from him as he lay, in the winter night, on his "mattress-grave" at Paris, and let his thoughts wander home to Germany, "the great child, entertaining herself with her Christmas-tree." "Thou tookest," — he cries to the German exile, —

"Thou tookest thy flight towards sunshine and happiness; naked and poor returnest thou back. German truth, German shirts, — one gets them worn to tatters in foreign parts.

"Deadly pale are thy looks, but take comfort, thou art at home! one lies warm in German earth, warm as by the old pleasant fireside.

"Many a one, alas, became crippled, and could get home no more! longingly he stretches out his arms; God have mercy upon him!" [2]

God have mercy upon him! for what remain of the days of the years of his life are few and evil. "Can it be that I still actually exist? My body is so shrunk that there is hardly anything of me left but my voice, and my bed makes me think of the melodious grave of the enchanter Merlin, which is in the forest of Broceliand in Brittany, under high oaks whose tops shine like green flames to heaven. Ah, I envy thee those trees, brother Merlin, and their fresh waving! for over my mattress-grave here in Paris no green leaves rustle; and early and late I hear nothing but the rattle of carriages, hammering, scolding, and the jingle of the piano. A grave without rest, death without the privi-

leges of the departed, who have no longer any need to spend money, or to write letters, or to compose books. What a melancholy situation!" [1]

He died, and has left a blemished name; with his crying faults, — his intemperate susceptibility, his unscrupulousness in passion, his inconceivable attacks on his enemies, his still more inconceivable attacks on his friends, his want of generosity, his sensuality, his incessant mocking, — how could it be otherwise? Not only was he not one of Mr. Carlyle's "respectable" people, he was profoundly *dis*respectable; and not even the merit of not being a Philistine can make up for a man's being that. To his intellectual deliverance there was an addition of something else wanting, and that something else was something immense: the old-fashioned, laborious, eternally needful moral deliverance. Goethe says that he was deficient in *love;* to me his weakness seems to be not so much a deficiency in love as a deficiency in self-respect, in true dignity of character. But on this negative side of one's criticism of a man of great genius, I for my part, when I have once clearly marked that this negative side is and must be there, have no pleasure in dwelling. I prefer to say of Heine something positive. He is not an adequate interpreter of the modern world. He is only a brilliant soldier in the Liberation War of humanity. But, such as he is, he is (and posterity too, I am quite sure, will say this), in the European poetry of that quarter of a century which follows the death of Goethe, incomparably the most important figure.

What a spendthrift, one is tempted to cry, is Nature! With what prodigality, in the march of generations, she employs human power, content to gather almost always little result from it, sometimes none! Look at Byron, that Byron whom the present genera-

tion of Englishmen are forgetting; Byron, the greatest natural force, the greatest elementary power, I cannot but think, which has appeared in our literature since Shakespeare. And what became of this wonderful production of nature? He shattered himself, he inevitably shattered himself to pieces against the huge, black, cloud-topped, interminable precipice of British Philistinism. But Byron, it may be said, was eminent only by his genius, only by his inborn force and fire; he had not the intellectual equipment of a supreme modern poet; except for his genius he was an ordinary nineteenth-century English gentleman, with little culture and with no ideas. Well, then, look at Heine. Heine had all the culture of Germany; in his head fermented all the ideas of modern Europe. And what have we got from Heine? A half-result, for want of moral balance, and of nobleness of soul and character. That is what I say; there is so much power, so many seem able to run well, so many give promise of running well; — so few reach the goal, so few are chosen. *Many are called, few chosen.*

MARCUS AURELIUS[1]

Mr. Mill[2] says, in his book on Liberty, that "Christian morality is in great part merely a protest against paganism; its ideal is negative rather than positive, passive rather than active." He says, that, in certain most important respects, "it falls far below the best morality of the ancients." Now, the object of systems of morality is to take possession of human life, to save it from being abandoned to passion or allowed to drift at hazard, to give it happiness by establishing it in the practice of virtue; and this object they seek to attain by prescribing to human life fixed principles of action, fixed rules of conduct. In its uninspired as well as in its inspired moments, in its days of languor and gloom as well as in its days of sunshine and energy, human life has thus always a clue to follow, and may always be making way towards its goal. Christian morality has not failed to supply to human life aids of this sort. It has supplied them far more abundantly than many of its critics imagine. The most exquisite document after those of the New Testament, of all the documents the Christian spirit has ever inspired, — the *Imitation*,[3] — by no means contains the whole of Christian morality; nay, the disparagers of this morality would think themselves sure of triumphing if one agreed to look for it in the *Imitation* only. But even the *Imitation* is full of passages like these: "Vita sine proposito languida et vaga est"; — "Omni die renovare debemus propositum nostrum, dicentes: nunc hodie perfecte incipiamus, quia nihil est quod hactenus fecimus"; —

"Secundum propositum nostrum est cursus profectus nostri"; — "Raro etiam unum vitium perfecte vincimus, et ad *quotidianum* profectum non accendimur"; "Semper aliquid certi proponendum est"; "Tibi ipsi violentiam frequenter fac." (*A life without a purpose is a languid, drifting thing; — Every day we ought to renew our purpose, saying to ourselves: This day let us make a sound beginning, for what we have hitherto done is nought; — Our improvement is in proportion to our purpose; — We hardly ever manage to get completely rid even of one fault, and do not set our hearts on* daily *improvement; — Always place a definite purpose before thee; — Get the habit of mastering thine inclination.*) These are moral precepts, and moral precepts of the best kind. As rules to hold possession of our conduct, and to keep us in the right course through outward troubles and inward perplexity, they are equal to the best ever furnished by the great masters of morals — Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius.

But moral rules, apprehended as ideas first, and then rigorously followed as laws, are, and must be, for the sage only. The mass of mankind have neither force of intellect enough to apprehend them clearly as ideas, nor force of character enough to follow them strictly as laws. The mass of mankind can be carried along a course full of hardship for the natural man, can be borne over the thousand impediments of the narrow way, only by the tide of a joyful and bounding emotion. It is impossible to rise from reading Epictetus[1] or Marcus Aurelius without a sense of constraint and melancholy, without feeling that the burden laid upon man is well-nigh greater than he can bear. Honor to the sages who have felt this, and yet have borne it! Yet, even for the sage, this sense of

labor and sorrow in his march towards the goal constitutes a relative inferiority; the noblest souls of whatever creed, the pagan Empedocles[1] as well as the Christian Paul, have insisted on the necessity of an inspiration, a joyful emotion, to make moral action perfect; an obscure indication of this necessity is the one drop of truth in the ocean of verbiage with which the controversy on justification by faith has flooded the world. But, for the ordinary man, this sense of labor and sorrow constitutes an absolute disqualification; it paralyzes him; under the weight of it, he cannot make way towards the goal at all. The paramount virtue of religion is, that it has *lighted up* morality; that it has supplied the emotion and inspiration needful for carrying the sage along the narrow way perfectly, for carrying the ordinary man along it at all. Even the religions with most dross in them have had something of this virtue; but the Christian religion manifests it with unexampled splendor. "Lead me, Zeus and Destiny!" says the prayer of Epictetus, "whithersoever I am appointed to go; I will follow without wavering; even though I turn coward and shrink, I shall have to follow all the same."[2] The fortitude of that is for the strong, for the few; even for them the spiritual atmosphere with which it surrounds them is bleak and gray. But, "Let thy loving spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness";[3] — "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory";[4] — "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings,"[5] says the Old Testament; "Born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God";[6] — "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God";[7] — "Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the

world,"[1] says the New. The ray of sunshine is there, the glow of a divine warmth; — the austerity of the sage melts away under it, the paralysis of the weak is healed; he who is vivified by it renews his strength; "all things are possible to him";[2] "he is a new creature."[3]

Epictetus says: "Every matter has two handles, one of which will bear taking hold of, the other not. If thy brother sin against thee, lay not hold of the matter by this, that he sins against thee; for by this handle the matter will not bear taking hold of. But rather lay hold of it by this, that he is thy brother, thy born mate; and thou wilt take hold of it by what will bear handling."[4] Jesus, being asked whether a man is bound to forgive his brother as often as seven times, answers: "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven."[5] Epictetus here suggests to the reason grounds for forgiveness of injuries which Jesus does not; but it is vain to say that Epictetus is on that account a better moralist than Jesus, if the warmth, the emotion, of Jesus's answer fires his hearer to the practice of forgiveness of injuries, while the thought in Epictetus's leaves him cold. So with Christian morality in general: its distinction is not that it propounds the maxim, "Thou shalt love God and thy neighbor,"[6] with more development, closer reasoning, truer sincerity, than other moral systems; it is that it propounds this maxim with an inspiration which wonderfully catches the hearer and makes him act upon it. It is because Mr. Mill has attained to the perception of truths of this nature, that he is, — instead of being, like the school from which he proceeds, doomed to sterility, — a writer of distinguished mark and influence, a writer deserving all attention and respect; it is (I must be par-

doned for saying) because he is not sufficiently leavened with them, that he falls just short of being a great writer.

That which gives to the moral writings of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius their peculiar character and charm, is their being suffused and softened by something of this very sentiment whence Christian morality draws its best power. Mr. Long[1] has recently published in a convenient form a translation of these writings, and has thus enabled English readers to judge Marcus Aurelius for themselves; he has rendered his countrymen a real service by so doing. Mr. Long's reputation as a scholar is a sufficient guarantee of the general fidelity and accuracy of his translation; on these matters, besides, I am hardly entitled to speak, and my praise is of no value. But that for which I and the rest of the unlearned may venture to praise Mr. Long is this: that he treats Marcus Aurelius's writings, as he treats all the other remains of Greek and Roman antiquity which he touches, not as a dead and dry matter of learning, but as documents with a side of modern applicability and living interest, and valuable mainly so far as this side in them can be made clear; that as in his notes on Plutarch's Roman Lives he deals with the modern epoch of Cæsar and Cicero, not as food for schoolboys, but as food for men, and men engaged in the current of contemporary life and action, so in his remarks and essays on Marcus Aurelius he treats this truly modern striver and thinker not as a Classical Dictionary hero, but as a present source from which to draw "example of life, and instruction of manners." Why may not a son of Dr. Arnold[2] say, what might naturally here be said by any other critic, that in this lively and fruitful way of considering the men and affairs of

ancient Greece and Rome, Mr. Long resembles Dr. Arnold?

One or two little complaints, however, I have against Mr. Long, and I will get them off my mind at once. In the first place, why could he not have found gentler and juster terms to describe the translation of his predecessor, Jeremy Collier,[1] — the redoubtable enemy of stage plays, — than these: "a most coarse and vulgar copy of the original?" As a matter of taste, a translator should deal leniently with his predecessor; but putting that out of the question, Mr. Long's language is a great deal too hard. Most English people who knew Marcus Aurelius before Mr. Long appeared as his introducer, knew him through Jeremy Collier. And the acquaintance of a man like Marcus Aurelius is such an imperishable benefit, that one can never lose a peculiar sense of obligation towards the man who confers it. Apart from this claim upon one's tenderness, however, Jeremy Collier's version deserves respect for its genuine spirit and vigor, the spirit and vigor of the age of Dryden. Jeremy Collier too, like Mr. Long, regarded in Marcus Aurelius the living moralist, and not the dead classic; and his warmth of feeling gave to his style an impetuosity and rhythm which from Mr. Long's style (I do not blame it on that account) are absent. Let us place the two side by side. The impressive opening of Marcus Aurelius's fifth book, Mr. Long translates thus: —

"In the morning when thou risest unwillingly, let this thought be present: I am rising to the work of a human being. Why then am I dissatisfied if I am going to do the things for which I exist and for which I was brought into the world? Or have I been made for this, to lie in the bed clothes and keep myself warm? — But this is more pleasant. — Dost thou

exist then to take thy pleasure, and not at all for action or exertion?"

Jeremy Collier has: —

"When you find an unwillingness to rise early in the morning, make this short speech to yourself: 'I am getting up now to do the business of a man; and am I out of humor for going about that which I was made for, and for the sake of which I was sent into the world? Was I then designed for nothing but to doze and batten beneath the counterpane? I thought action had been the end of your being.'"

In another striking passage, again, Mr. Long has: —

"No longer wonder at hazard; for neither wilt thou read thy own memoirs, nor the acts of the ancient Romans and Hellenes, and the selections from books which thou wast reserving for thy old age. Hasten then to the end which thou hast before thee, and, throwing away idle hopes, come to thine own aid, if thou carest at all for thyself, while it is in thy power."[1]

Here his despised predecessor has: —

"Don't go too far in your books and overgrasp yourself. Alas, you have no time left to peruse your diary, to read over the Greek and Roman history: come, don't flatter and deceive yourself; look to the main chance, to the end and design of reading, and mind life more than notion: I say, if you have a kindness for your person, drive at the practice and help youself, for that is in your own power."

It seems to me that here for style and force Jeremy Collier can (to say the least) perfectly stand comparison with Mr. Long. Jeremy Collier's real defect as a translator is not his coarseness and vulgarity, but his imperfect acquaintance with Greek; this is a serious defect, a fatal one; it rendered a translation like Mr. Long's necessary. Jeremy Collier's work will now be

forgotten, and Mr. Long stands master of the field; but he may be content, at any rate, to leave his predecessor's grave unharmed, even if he will not throw upon it, in passing, a handful of kindly earth.

Another complaint I have against Mr. Long is, that he is not quite idiomatic and simple enough. It is a little formal, at least, if not pedantic, to say *Ethic* and *Dialectic*, instead of *Ethics* and *Dialectics*, and to say "*Hellenes* and Romans" instead of "*Greeks* and Romans." And why, too, — the name of Antoninus being preoccupied by Antoninus Pius,[1] — will Mr. Long call his author Marcus *Antoninus* instead of Marcus *Aurelius?* Small as these matters appear, they are important when one has to deal with the general public, and not with a small circle of scholars; and it is the general public that the translator of a short masterpiece on morals, such as is the book of Marcus Aurelius, should have in view; his aim should be to make Marcus Aurelius's work as popular as the *Imitation*, and Marcus Aurelius's name as familiar as Socrates's. In rendering or naming him, therefore, punctilious accuracy of phrase is not so much to be sought as accessibility and currency; everything which may best enable the Emperor and his precepts *volitare per ora virum*.[2] It is essential to render him in language perfectly plain and unprofessional, and to call him by the name by which he is best and most distinctly known. The translators of the Bible talk of *pence* and not *denarii*, and the admirers of Voltaire do not celebrate him under the name of Arouet.[3]

But, after these trifling complaints are made, one must end, as one began, in unfeigned gratitude to Mr. Long for his excellent and substantial reproduction in English of an invaluable work. In general the substantiality, soundness, and precision of Mr. Long's

rendering are (I will venture, after all, to give my opinion about them) as conspicuous as the living spirit with which he treats antiquity; and these qualities are particularly desirable in the translator of a work like that of Marcus Aurelius, of which the language is often corrupt, almost always hard and obscure. Any one who wants to appreciate Mr. Long's merits as a translator may read, in the original and in Mr. Long's translation, the seventh chapter of the tenth book; he will see how, through all the dubiousness and involved manner of the Greek, Mr. Long has firmly seized upon the clear thought which is certainly at the bottom of that troubled wording, and, in distinctly rendering this thought, has at the same time thrown round its expression a characteristic shade of painfulness and difficulty which just suits it. And Marcus Aurelius's book is one which, when it is rendered so accurately as Mr. Long renders it, even those who know Greek tolerably well may choose to read rather in the translation than in the original. For not only are the contents here incomparably more valuable than the external form, but this form, the Greek of a Roman, is not exactly one of those styles which have a physiognomy, which are an essential part of their author, which stamp an indelible impression of him on the reader's mind. An old Lyons commentator finds, indeed, in Marcus Aurelius's Greek, something characteristic, something specially firm and imperial; but I think an ordinary mortal will hardly find this: he will find crabbed Greek, without any great charm of distinct physiognomy. The Greek of Thucydides and Plato has this charm, and he who reads them in a translation, however accurate, loses it, and loses much in losing it; but the Greek of Marcus Aurelius, like the Greek of the New Testament, and even more than the Greek of the New

Testament, is wanting in it. If one could be assured that the English Testament were made perfectly accurate, one might be almost content never to open a Greek Testament again; and, Mr. Long's version of Marcus Aurelius being what it is, an Englishman who reads to live, and does not live to read, may henceforth let the Greek original repose upon its shelf.

The man whose thoughts Mr. Long has thus faithfully reproduced, is perhaps the most beautiful figure in history. He is one of those consoling and hope-inspiring marks, which stand forever to remind our weak and easily discouraged race how high human goodness and perseverance have once been carried, and may be carried again. The interest of mankind is peculiarly attracted by examples of signal goodness in high places; for that testimony to the worth of goodness is the most striking which is borne by those to whom all the means of pleasure and self-indulgence lay open, by those who had at their command the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Marcus Aurelius was the ruler of the grandest of empires; and he was one of the best of men. Besides him, history presents one or two sovereigns eminent for their goodness, such as Saint Louis or Alfred. But Marcus Aurelius has, for us moderns, this great superiority in interest over Saint Louis or Alfred, that he lived and acted in a state of society modern by its essential characteristics, in an epoch akin to our own, in a brilliant centre of civilization. Trajan talks of "our enlightened age" just as glibly as the *Times*[1] talks of it. Marcus Aurelius thus becomes for us a man like ourselves, a man in all things tempted as we are. Saint Louis[2] inhabits an atmosphere of mediæval Catholicism, which the man of the nineteenth century may admire, indeed, may even passionately wish to inhabit,

but which, strive as he will, he cannot really inhabit. Alfred belongs to a state of society (I say it with all deference to the *Saturday Review*[1] critic who keeps such jealous watch over the honor of our Saxon ancestors) half barbarous. Neither Alfred nor Saint Louis can be morally and intellectually as near to us as Marcus Aurelius.

The record of the outward life of this admirable man has in it little of striking incident. He was born at Rome on the 26th of April, in the year 121 of the Christian era. He was nephew and son-in-law to his predecessor on the throne, Antoninus Pius. When Antoninus died, he was forty years old, but from the time of his earliest manhood he had assisted in administering public affairs. Then, after his uncle's death in 161, for nineteen years he reigned as emperor. The barbarians were pressing on the Roman frontier, and a great part of Marcus Aurelius's nineteen years of reign was passed in campaigning. His absences from Rome were numerous and long. We hear of him in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Greece; but, above all, in the countries on the Danube, where the war with the barbarians was going on, — in Austria, Moravia, Hungary. In these countries much of his Journal seems to have been written; parts of it are dated from them; and there, a few weeks before his fifty-ninth birthday, he fell sick and died.[2] The record of him on which his fame chiefly rests is the record of his inward life, — his *Journal*, or *Commentaries*, or *Meditations*, or *Thoughts*, for by all these names has the work been called. Perhaps the most interesting of the records of his outward life is that which the first book of this work supplies, where he gives an account of his education, recites the names of those to whom he is indebted for it, and enumerates his obligations to each

of them. It is a refreshing and consoling picture, a priceless treasure for those, who, sick of the "wild and dreamlike trade of blood and guile," which seems to be nearly the whole of what history has to offer to our view, seek eagerly for that substratum of right thinking and well-doing which in all ages must surely have somewhere existed, for without it the continued life of humanity would have been impossible. "From my mother I learnt piety and beneficence, and abstinence not only from evil deeds but even from evil thoughts; and further, simplicity in my way of living, far removed from the habits of the rich." Let us remember that, the next time we are reading the sixth satire of Juvenal.[1] "From my tutor I learnt" (hear it, ye tutors of princes!) "endurance of labor, and to want little and to work with my own hands, and not to meddle with other people's affairs, and not to be ready to listen to slander." The vices and foibles of the Greek sophist or rhetorician — the *Græculus esuriens*[2] — are in everybody's mind; but he who reads Marcus Aurelius's account of his Greek teachers and masters, will understand how it is that, in spite of the vices and foibles of individual *Græculi*, the education of the human race owes to Greece a debt which can never be overrated. The vague and colorless praise of history leaves on the mind hardly any impression of Antoninus Pius: it is only from the private memoranda of his nephew that we learn what a disciplined, hard-working, gentle, wise, virtuous man he was; a man who, perhaps, interests mankind less than his immortal nephew only because he has left in writing no record of his inner life, — *caret quia vate sacro*.[3]

Of the outward life and circumstances of Marcus Aurelius, beyond these notices which he has himself supplied, there are few of much interest and importance.

There is the fine anecdote of his speech when he heard of the assassination of the revolted Avidius Cassius,[1] against whom he was marching; *he was sorry*, he said, *to be deprived of the pleasure of pardoning him.* And there are one or two more anecdotes of him which show the same spirit. But the great record for the outward life of a man who has left such a record of his lofty inward aspirations as that which Marcus Aurelius has left, is the clear consenting voice of all his contemporaries, — high and low, friend and enemy, pagan and Christian, — in praise of his sincerity, justice, and goodness. The world's charity does not err on the side of excess, and here was a man occupying the most conspicuous station in the world, and professing the highest possible standard of conduct; — yet the world was obliged to declare that he walked worthily of his profession. Long after his death, his bust was to be seen in the houses of private men through the wide Roman empire. It may be the vulgar part of human nature which busies itself with the semblance and doings of living sovereigns, it is its nobler part which busies itself with those of the dead; these busts of Marcus Aurelius, in the homes of Gaul, Britain, and Italy, bear witness, not to the inmates' frivolous curiosity about princes and palaces, but to their reverential memory of the passage of a great man upon the earth.

Two things, however, before one turns from the outward to the inward life of Marcus Aurelius, force themselves upon one's notice, and demand a word of comment; he persecuted the Christians, and he had for his son the vicious and brutal Commodus.[2] The persecution at Lyons, in which Attalus[3] and Pothinus suffered, the persecution at Smyrna, in which Polycarp[4] suffered, took place in his reign. Of his humanity, of

his tolerance, of his horror of cruelty and violence, of his wish to refrain from severe measures against the Christians, of his anxiety to temper the severity of these measures when they appeared to him indispensable, there is no doubt: but, on the one hand, it is certain that the letter, attributed to him, directing that no Christian should be punished for being a Christian, is spurious; it is almost certain that his alleged answer to the authorities of Lyons, in which he directs that Christians persisting in their profession shall be dealt with according to law, is genuine. Mr. Long seems inclined to try and throw doubt over the persecution at Lyons, by pointing out that the letter of the Lyons Christians relating it, alleges it to have been attended by miraculous and incredible incidents. "A man," he says, "can only act consistently by accepting all this letter or rejecting it all, and we cannot blame him for either." But it is contrary to all experience to say that because a fact is related with incorrect additions, and embellishments, therefore it probably never happened at all; or that it is not, in general, easy for an impartial mind to distinguish between the fact and the embellishments. I cannot doubt that the Lyons persecution took place, and that the punishment of Christians for being Christians was sanctioned by Marcus Aurelius. But then I must add that nine modern readers out of ten, when they read this, will, I believe, have a perfectly false notion of what the moral action of Marcus Aurelius, in sanctioning that punishment, really was. They imagine Trajan, or Antoninus Pius, or Marcus Aurelius, fresh from the perusal of the Gospel, fully aware of the spirit and holiness of the Christian saints, ordering their extermination because he loved darkness rather than light. Far from this, the Christianity which these

emperors aimed at repressing was, in their conception of it, something philosophically contemptible, politically subversive, and morally abominable. As men, they sincerely regarded it much as well-conditioned people, with us, regard Mormonism; as rulers, they regarded it much as Liberal statesmen, with us, regard the Jesuits. A kind of Mormonism, constituted as a vast secret society, with obscure aims of political and social subversion, was what Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius believed themselves to be repressing when they punished Christians. The early Christian apologists again and again declare to us under what odious imputations the Christians lay, how general was the belief that these imputations were well-grounded, how sincere was the horror which the belief inspired. The multitude, convinced that the Christians were atheists who ate human flesh and thought incest no crime, displayed against them a fury so passionate as to embarrass and alarm their rulers. The severe expressions of Tacitus, *exitiabilis superstitio — odio humani generis convicti*,[1] show how deeply the prejudices of the multitude imbued the educated class also. One asks oneself with astonishment how a doctrine so benign as that of Jesus Christ can have incurred misrepresentation so monstrous. The inner and moving cause of the misrepresentation lay, no doubt, in this, — that Christianity was a new spirit in the Roman world, destined to act in that world as its dissolvent; and it was inevitable that Christianity in the Roman world, like democracy in the modern world, like every new spirit with a similar mission assigned to it, should at its first appearance occasion an instinctive shrinking and repugnance in the world which it was to dissolve. The outer and palpable causes of the misrepresentation were, for the Roman public at

large, the confounding of the Christians with the Jews, that isolated, fierce, and stubborn race, whose stubbornness, fierceness, and isolation, real as they were, the fancy of a civilized Roman yet further exaggerated; the atmosphere of mystery and novelty which surrounded the Christian rites; the very simplicity of Christian theism. For the Roman statesman, the cause of mistake lay in that character of secret assemblages which the meetings of the Christian community wore, under a State-system as jealous of unauthorized associations as is the State-system of modern France.

A Roman of Marcus Aurelius's time and position could not well see the Christians except through the mist of these prejudices. Seen through such a mist, the Christians appeared with a thousand faults not their own; but it has not been sufficiently remarked that faults really their own many of them assuredly appeared with besides, faults especially likely to strike such an observer as Marcus Aurelius, and to confirm him in the prejudices of his race, station, and rearing. We look back upon Christianity after it has proved what a future it bore within it, and for us the sole representatives of its early struggles are the pure and devoted spirits through whom it proved this; Marcus Aurelius saw it with its future yet unshown, and with the tares among its professed progeny not less conspicuous than the wheat. Who can doubt that among the professing Christians of the second century, as among the professing Christians of the nineteenth, there was plenty of folly, plenty of rabid nonsense, plenty of gross fanaticism? who will even venture to affirm that, separated in great measure from the intellect and civilization of the world for one or two centuries, Christianity, wonderful as have been its fruits, had the development perfectly worthy of its inestimable

germ? Who will venture to affirm that, by the alliance of Christianity with the virtue and intelligence of men like the Antonines, — of the best product of Greek and Roman civilization, while Greek and Roman civilization had yet life and power, — Christianity and the world, as well as the Antonines themselves, would not have been gainers? That alliance was not to be. The Antonines lived and died with an utter misconception of Christianity; Christianity grew up in the Catacombs, not on the Palatine. And Marcus Aurelius incurs no moral reproach by having authorized the punishment of the Christians; he does not thereby become in the least what we mean by a *persecutor*. One may concede that it was impossible for him to see Christianity as it really was; — as impossible as for even the moderate and sensible Fleury[1] to see the Antonines as they really were; — one may concede that the point of view from which Christianity appeared something anti-civil and anti-social, which the State had the faculty to judge and the duty to suppress, was inevitably his. Still, however, it remains true that this sage, who made perfection his aim and reason his law, did Christianity an immense injustice and rested in an idea of State-attributes which was illusive. And this is, in truth, characteristic of Marcus Aurelius, that he is blameless, yet, in a certain sense, unfortunate; in his character, beautiful as it is, there is something melancholy, circumscribed, and ineffectual.

For of his having such a son as Commodus, too, one must say that he is not to be blamed on that account, but that he is unfortunate. Disposition and temperament are inexplicable things; there are natures on which the best education and example are thrown away; excellent fathers may have, without any fault of theirs, incurably vicious sons. It is to be remem-

bered, also, that Commodus was left, at the perilous age of nineteen, master of the world; while his father, at that age, was but beginning a twenty years' apprenticeship to wisdom, labor, and self-command, under the sheltering teachership of his uncle Antoninus. Commodus was a prince apt to be led by favorites; and if the story is true which says that he left, all through his reign, the Christians untroubled, and ascribes this lenity to the influence of his mistress Marcia, it shows that he could be led to good as well as to evil. But for such a nature to be left at a critical age with absolute power, and wholly without good counsel and direction, was the more fatal. Still one cannot help wishing that the example of Marcus Aurelius could have availed more with his own only son. One cannot but think that with such virtue as his there should go, too, the ardor which removes mountains, and that the ardor which removes mountains might have even won Commodus. The word *ineffectual* again rises to one's mind; Marcus Aurelius saved his own soul by his righteousness, and he could do no more. Happy they who can do this! but still happier, who can do more!

Yet, when one passes from his outward to his inward life, when one turns over the pages of his *Meditations*, — entries jotted down from day to day, amid the business of the city or the fatigues of the camp, for his own guidance and support, meant for no eye but his own, without the slightest attempt at style, with no care, even, for correct writing, not to be surpassed for naturalness and sincerity, — all disposition to carp and cavil dies away, and one is overpowered by the charm of a character of such purity, delicacy, and virtue. He fails neither in small things nor in great; he keeps watch over himself both that the great

springs of action may be right in him, and that the minute details of action may be right also. How admirable in a hard-tasked ruler, and a ruler too, with a passion for thinking and reading, is such a memorandum as the following: —

"Not frequently nor without necessity to say to any one, or to write in a letter, that I have no leisure; nor continually to excuse the neglect of duties required by our relation to those with whom we live, by alleging urgent occupation."[1]

And, when that ruler is a Roman emperor, what an "idea" is this to be written down and meditated by him: —

"The idea of a polity in which there is the same law for all, a polity administered with regard to equal rights and equal freedom of speech, and the idea of a kingly government which respects most of all the freedom of the governed."[2]

And, for all men who "drive at practice," what practical rules may not one accumulate out of these *Meditations*: —

"The greatest part of what we say or do being unnecessary, if a man takes this away, he will have more leisure and less uneasiness. Accordingly, on every occasion a man should ask himself: 'Is this one of the unnecessary things?' Now a man should take away not only unnecessary acts, but also unnecessary thoughts, for thus superfluous acts will not follow after."[3]

And again: —

"We ought to check in the series of our thoughts everything that is without a purpose and useless, but most of all the over curious feeling and the malignant; and a man should use himself to think of those things only about which if one should suddenly ask, 'What hast thou now in thy thoughts?' with perfect open-

ness thou mightest immediately answer, 'This or That'; so that from thy words it should be plain that everything in thee is simple and benevolent, and such as befits a social animal, and one that cares not for thoughts about sensual enjoyments, or any rivalry or envy and suspicion, or anything else for which thou wouldst blush if thou shouldst say thou hadst it in thy mind."[1]

So, with a stringent practicalness worthy of Franklin, he discourses on his favorite text, *Let nothing be done without a purpose.* But it is when he enters the region where Franklin cannot follow him, when he utters his thoughts on the ground-motives of human action, that he is most interesting; that he becomes the unique, the incomparable Marcus Aurelius. Christianity uses language very liable to be misunderstood when it seems to tell men to do good, not, certainly, from the vulgar motives of worldly interest, or vanity, or love of human praise, but "that their Father which seeth in secret may reward them openly." The motives of reward and punishment have come, from the misconception of language of this kind, to be strangely overpressed by many Christian moralists, to the deterioration and disfigurement of Christianity. Marcus Aurelius says, truly and nobly: —

"One man, when he has done a service to another, is ready to set it down to his account as a favor conferred. Another is not ready to do this, but still in his own mind he thinks of the man as his debtor, and he knows what he has done. A third in a manner does not even know what he has done, *but he is like a vine which has produced grapes, and seeks for nothing more after it has once produced its proper fruit.* As a horse when he has run, a dog when he has caught the game, a bee when it has made its honey, so a man

when he has done a good act, does not call out for others to come and see, but he goes on to another act, as a vine goes on to produce again the grapes in season. Must a man, then, be one of these, who in a manner acts thus without observing it? Yes."[1]

And again:—

"What more dost thou want when thou hast done a man a service? Art thou not content that thou hast done something conformable to thy nature, and dost thou seek to be paid for it, *just as if the eye demanded a recompense for seeing, or the feet for walking?*"[2]

Christianity, in order to match morality of this strain, has to correct its apparent offers of external reward, and to say: *The kingdom of God is within you.*

I have said that it is by its accent of emotion that the morality of Marcus Aurelius acquires a special character, and reminds one of Christian morality. The sentences of Seneca[3] are stimulating to the intellect; the sentences of Epictetus are fortifying to the character; the sentences of Marcus Aurelius find their way to the soul. I have said that religious emotion has the power to *light up* morality: the emotion of Marcus Aurelius does not quite light up his morality, but it suffuses it; it has not power to melt the clouds of effort and austerity quite away, but it shines through them and glorifies them; it is a spirit, not so much of gladness and elation, as of gentleness and sweetness; a delicate and tender sentiment, which is less than joy and more than resignation. He says that in his youth he learned from Maximus, one of his teachers, "cheerfulness in all circumstances as well as in illness; *and a just admixture in the moral character of sweetness and dignity*": and it is this very admixture of sweetness with his dignity which makes him so beau

tiful a moralist. It enables him to carry even into his observation of nature, a delicate penetration, a sympathetic tenderness, worthy of Wordsworth; the spirit of such a remark as the following has hardly a parallel, so far as my knowledge goes, in the whole range of Greek and Roman literature:—

"Figs, when they are quite ripe, gape open; and in the ripe olives the very circumstance of their being near to rottenness adds a peculiar beauty to the fruit. And the ears of corn bending down, and the lion's eyebrows, and the foam which flows from the mouth of wild boars, and many other things, — though they are far from being beautiful, in a certain sense, — still, because they come in the course of nature, have a beauty in them, and they please the mind; so that if a man should have a feeling and a deeper insight with respect to the things which are produced in the universe, there is hardly anything which comes in the course of nature which will not seem to him to be in a manner disposed so as to give pleasure."[1]

But it is when his strain passes to directly moral subjects that his delicacy and sweetness lend to it the greatest charm. Let those who can feel the beauty of spiritual refinement read this, the reflection of an emperor who prized mental superiority highly:—

"Thou sayest, 'Men cannot admire the sharpness of thy wits.' Be it so; but there are many other things of which thou canst not say, 'I am not formed for them by nature.' Show those qualities, then, which are altogether in thy power, — sincerity, gravity, endurance of labor, aversion to pleasure, contentment with thy portion and with few things, benevolence, frankness, no love of superfluity, freedom from trifling, magnanimity. Dost thou not see how many qualities thou art at once able to exhibit, as to which there is

no excuse of natural incapacity and unfitness, and yet thou still remainest voluntarily below the mark? Or art thou compelled, through being defectively furnished by nature, to murmur, and to be mean, and to flatter, and to find fault with thy poor body, and to try to please men, and to make great display, and to be so restless in thy mind? No, indeed; but thou mightest have been delivered from these things long ago. Only, if in truth thou canst be charged with being rather slow and dull of comprehension, thou must exert thyself about this also, not neglecting nor yet taking pleasure in thy dulness."[1]

The same sweetness enables him to fix his mind, when he sees the isolation and moral death caused by sin, not on the cheerless thought of the misery of this condition, but on the inspiriting thought that man is blest with the power to escape from it: —

"Suppose that thou hast detached thyself from the natural unity, — for thou wast made by nature a part, but thou hast cut thyself off, — yet here is this beautiful provision, that it is in thy power again to unite thyself. God has allowed this to no other part, — after it has been separated and cut asunder, to come together again. But consider the goodness with which he has privileged man; for he has put it in his power, when he has been separated, to return and to be united and to resume his place."[2]

It enables him to control even the passion for retreat and solitude, so strong in a soul like his, to which the world could offer no abiding city: —

"Men seek retreat for themselves, houses in the country, seashores, and mountains; and thou, too, art wont to desire such things very much. But this is altogether a mark of the most common sort of men, for it is in thy power whenever thou shalt choose to retire

into thyself. For nowhere either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble does a man retire than into his own soul, particularly when he has within him such thoughts that by looking into them he is immediately in perfect tranquillity. Constantly, then, give to thyself this retreat, and renew thyself; and let thy principles be brief and fundamental, which as soon as thou shalt recur to them, will be sufficient to cleanse the soul completely, and to send thee back free from all discontent with the things to which thou returnest." [1]

Against this feeling of discontent and weariness, so natural to the great for whom there seems nothing left to desire or to strive after, but so enfeebling to them, so deteriorating, Marcus Aurelius never ceased to struggle. With resolute thankfulness he kept in remembrance the blessings of his lot; the true blessings of it, not the false: —

"I have to thank Heaven that I was subjected to a ruler and a father (Antoninus Pius) who was able to take away all pride from me, and to bring me to the knowledge that it is possible for a man to live in a palace without either guards, or embroidered dresses, or any show of this kind; but that it is in such a man's power to bring himself very near to the fashion of a private person, without being for this reason either meaner in thought or more remiss in action with respect to the things which must be done for public interest. . . . I have to be thankful that my children have not been stupid nor deformed in body; that I did not make more proficiency in rhetoric, poetry, and the other studies, by which I should perhaps have been completely engrossed, if I had seen that I was making great progress in them; . . . that I knew Apollonius, Rusticus, Maximus; . . . that I received clear and frequent impressions about living according to nature,

and what kind of a life that is, so that, so far as depended on Heaven, and its gifts, help, and inspiration, nothing hindered me from forthwith living according to nature, though I still fall short of it through my own fault, and through not observing the admonitions of Heaven, and, I may almost say, its direct instructions; that my body has held out so long in such a kind of life as mine; that though it was my mother's lot to die young, she spent the last years of her life with me; that whenever I wished to help any man in his need, I was never told that I had not the means of doing it; that, when I had an inclination to philosophy, I did not fall into the hands of a sophist." [1]

And, as he dwelt with gratitude on these helps and blessings vouchsafed to him, his mind (so, at least, it seems to me) would sometimes revert with awe to the perils and temptations of the lonely height where he stood, to the lives of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Domitian,[2] in their hideous blackness and ruin; and then he wrote down for himself such a warning entry as this, significant and terrible in its abruptness:—

"A black character, a womanish character, a stubborn character, bestial, childish, animal, stupid, counterfeit, scurrilous, fraudulent, tyrannical!" [3]

Or this: —

"About what am I now employing my soul? On every occasion I must ask myself this question, and inquire, What have I now in this part of me which they call the ruling principle, and whose soul have I now? — that of a child, or of a young man, or of a weak woman, or of a tyrant, or of one of the lower animals in the service of man, or of a wild beast?" [4]

The character he wished to attain he knew well, and beautifully he has marked it, and marked, too, his sense of shortcoming: —

"When thou hast assumed these names, — good, modest, true, rational, equal-minded, magnanimous, — take care that thou dost not change these names; and, if thou shouldst lose them, quickly return to them. If thou maintainest thyself in possession of these names without desiring that others should call thee by them, thou wilt be another being, and wilt enter on another life. For to continue to be such as thou hast hitherto been, and to be torn in pieces and defiled in such a life, is the character of a very stupid man, and one overfond of his life, and like those half-devoured fighters with wild beasts, who though covered with wounds and gore still entreat to be kept to the following day, though they will be exposed in the same state to the same claws and bites. Therefore fix thyself in the possession of these few names: and if thou art able to abide in them, abide as if thou wast removed to the Happy Islands."[1]

For all his sweetness and serenity, however, man's point of life "between two infinities" (of that expression Marcus Aurelius is the real owner) was to him anything but a Happy Island, and the performances on it he saw through no veils of illusion. Nothing is in general more gloomy and monotonous than declamations on the hollowness and transitoriness of human life and grandeur: but here, too, the great charm of Marcus Aurelius, his emotion, comes in to relieve the monotony and to break through the gloom; and even on this eternally used topic he is imaginative, fresh, and striking: —

"Consider, for example, the times of Vespasian. Thou wilt see all these things, people marrying, bringing up children, sick, dying, warring, feasting, trafficking, cultivating the ground, flattering, obstinately arrogant, suspecting, plotting, wishing for somebody

to die, grumbling about the present, loving, heaping up treasure, desiring to be consuls or kings. Well then that life of these people no longer exists at all. Again, go to the times of Trajan. All is again the same. Their life too is gone. But chiefly thou shouldst think of those whom thou hast thyself known distracting themselves about idle things, neglecting to do what was in accordance with their proper constitution, and to hold firmly to this and to be content with it." [1]

Again: —

"The things which are much valued in life are empty, and rotten, and trifling; and people are like little dogs, biting one another, and little children quarrelling, crying, and then straightway laughing. But fidelity, and modesty, and justice, and truth, are fled

'Up to Olympus from the wide-spread earth.'

What then is there which still detains thee here?" [2]

And once more: —

"Look down from above on the countless herds of men, and their countless solemnities, and the infinitely varied voyagings in storms and calms, and the differences among those who are born, who live together, and die. And consider too the life lived by others in olden time, and the life now lived among barbarous nations, and how many know not even thy name, and how many will soon forget it, and how they who perhaps now are praising thee will very soon blame thee, and that neither a posthumous name is of any value, nor reputation, nor anything else." [3]

He recognized, indeed, that (to use his own words) "the prime principle in man's constitution is the social"; [4] and he labored sincerely to make not only his acts towards his fellow-men, but his thoughts also, suitable to this conviction: —

"When thou wishest to delight thyself, think of the virtues of those who live with thee; for instance, the activity of one, and the modesty of another, and the liberality of a third, and some other good quality of a fourth."[1]

Still, it is hard for a pure and thoughtful man to live in a state of rapture at the spectacle afforded to him by his fellow-creatures; above all it is hard, when such a man is placed as Marcus Aurelius was placed, and has had the meanness and perversity of his fellow-creatures thrust, in no common measure, upon his notice, — has had, time after time, to experience how "within ten days thou wilt seem a god to those to whom thou art now a beast and an ape." His true strain of thought as to his relations with his fellow-men is rather the following. He has been enumerating the higher consolations which may support a man at the approach of death, and he goes on: —

"But if thou requirest also a vulgar kind of comfort which shall reach thy heart, thou wilt be made best reconciled to death by observing the objects from which thou art going to be removed, and the morals of those with whom thy soul will no longer be mingled. For it is no way right to be offended with men, but it is thy duty to care for them and to bear with them gently; and yet to remember that thy departure will not be from men who have the same principles as thyself. For this is the only thing, if there be any, which could draw us the contrary way and attach us to life, to be permitted to live with those who have the same principles as ourselves. But now thou seest how great is the distress caused by the difference of those who live together, so that thou mayest say: 'Come quick, O death, lest perchance I too should forget myself.'"[2]

O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?[1] Sometimes this strain rises even to passion: —

"Short is the little which remains to thee of life. Live as on a mountain. Let men see, let them know, a real man, who lives as he was meant to live. If they cannot endure him, let them kill him. For that is better than to live as men do."[2]

It is remarkable how little of a merely local and temporary character, how little of those *scoriæ* which a reader has to clear away before he gets to the precious ore, how little that even admits of doubt or question, the morality of Marcus Aurelius exhibits. Perhaps as to one point we must make an exception. Marcus Aurelius is fond of urging as a motive for man's cheerful acquiescence in whatever befalls him, that "whatever happens to every man *is for the interest of the universal*";[3] that the whole contains nothing *which is not for its advantage;* that everything which happens to a man is to be accepted, "even if it seems disagreeable, *because it leads to the health of the universe.*"[4] And the whole course of the universe, he adds, has a providential reference to man's welfare: "*all other things have been made for the sake of rational beings.*"[5] Religion has in all ages freely used this language, and it is not religion which will object to Marcus Aurelius's use of it; but science can hardly accept as severely accurate this employment of the terms *interest* and *advantage*. To a sound nature and a clear reason the proposition that things happen "for the interest of the universal," as men conceive of interest, may seem to have no meaning at all, and the proposition that "all things have been made for the sake of rational beings" may seem to be false. Yet even to this language, not irresistibly cogent when it is thus

absolutely used, Marcus Aurelius gives a turn which makes it true and useful, when he says: "The ruling part of man can make a material for itself out of that which opposes it, as fire lays hold of what falls into it, and rises higher by means of this very material";[1] — when he says: "What else are all things except exercises for the reason? Persevere then until thou shalt have made all things thine own, as the stomach which is strengthened makes all things its own, as the blazing fire makes flame and brightness out of everything that is thrown into it";[2] — when he says: "Thou wilt not cease to be miserable till thy mind is in such a condition, that, what luxury is to those who enjoy pleasure, such shall be to thee, in every matter which presents itself, the doing of the things which are conformable to man's constitution; for a man ought to consider as an enjoyment everything which it is in his power to do according to his own nature, — and it is in his power everywhere."[3] In this sense it is, indeed, most true that "all things have been made for the sake of rational beings"; that "all things work together for good."

In general, however, the action Marcus Aurelius prescribes is action which every sound nature must recognize as right, and the motives he assigns are motives which every clear reason must recognize as valid. And so he remains the especial friend and comforter of all clear-headed and scrupulous, yet pure-hearted and upward striving men, in those ages most especially that walk by sight, not by faith, but yet have no open vision. He cannot give such souls, perhaps, all they yearn for, but he gives them much; and what he gives them, they can receive.

Yet no, it is not for what he thus gives them that such souls love him most! it is rather because of the emo-

tion which lends to his voice so touching an accent, it is because he too yearns as they do for something unattained by him. What an affinity for Christianity had this persecutor of the Christians! The effusion of Christianity, its relieving tears, its happy self-sacrifice, were the very element, one feels, for which his soul longed; they were near him, they brushed him, he touched them, he passed them by. One feels, too, that the Marcus Aurelius one reads must still have remained, even had Christianity been fully known to him, in a great measure himself; he would have been no Justin; — but how would Christianity have affected him? in what measure would it have changed him? Granted that he might have found, like the *Alogi*[1] of modern times, in the most beautiful of the Gospels, the Gospel which has leavened Christendom most powerfully, the Gospel of St. John, too much Greek metaphysics, too much *gnosis*;[2] granted that this Gospel might have looked too like what he knew already to be a total surprise to him: what, then, would he have said to the Sermon on the Mount, to the twenty-sixth chapter of St. Matthew? What would have become of his notions of the *exitiabilis superstitio*, of the "obstinacy of the Christians"? Vain question! yet the greatest charm of Marcus Aurelius is that he makes us ask it. We see him wise, just, self-governed, tender, thankful, blameless; yet, with all this, agitated, stretching out his arms for something beyond, — *tendentemque manus ripæ ulterioris amore*.[3]

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CELTS TO ENGLISH LITERATURE[1]

If I were asked where English poetry got these three things, its turn for style, its turn for melancholy, and its turn for natural magic, for catching and rendering the charm of nature in a wonderfully near and vivid way, — I should answer, with some doubt, that it got much of its turn for style from a Celtic source; with less doubt, that it got much of its melancholy from a Celtic source; with no doubt at all, that from a Celtic source it got nearly all its natural magic.

Any German with penetration and tact in matters of literary criticism will own that the principal deficiency of German poetry is in style; that for style, in the highest sense, it shows but little feeling. Take the eminent masters of style, the poets who best give the idea of what the peculiar power which lies in style is — Pindar, Virgil, Dante, Milton. An example of the peculiar effect which these poets produce, you can hardly give from German poetry. Examples enough you can give from German poetry of the effect produced by genius, thought, and feeling expressing themselves in clear language, simple language, passionate language, eloquent language, with harmony and melody: but not of the peculiar effect exercised by eminent power of style. Every reader of Dante can at once call to mind what the peculiar effect I mean is; I spoke of it in my lectures on translating Homer, and there I took an example of it from Dante, who perhaps manifests it more eminently than any other poet.

But from Milton, too, one may take examples of it abundantly; compare this from Milton: —

> ". . . nor sometimes forget
> Those other two equal with me in fate,
> So were I equall'd with them in renown,
> Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides —"[1]

with this from Goethe: —

> "Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
> Sich ein Character in dem Strom der Welt."[2]

Nothing can be better in its way than the style in which Goethe there presents his thought, but it is the style of prose as much as of poetry; it is lucid, harmonious, earnest, eloquent, but it has not received that peculiar kneading, heightening, and recasting which is observable in the style of the passage from Milton — a style which seems to have for its cause a certain pressure of emotion, and an ever-surging, yet bridled, excitement in the poet, giving a special intensity to his way of delivering himself. In poetical races and epochs this turn for style is peculiarly observable; and perhaps it is only on condition of having this somewhat heightened and difficult manner, so different from the plain manner of prose, that poetry gets the privilege of being loosed, at its best moments, into that perfectly simple, limpid style, which is the supreme style of all, but the simplicity of which is still not the simplicity of prose. The simplicity of Menander's[3] style is the simplicity of prose, and is the same kind of simplicity as that which Goethe's style, in the passage I have quoted, exhibits; but Menander does not belong to a great poetical moment, he comes too late for it; it is the simple passages in poets like Pindar or Dante which are perfect, being masterpieces of *poetical* simplicity. One may say the same of the simple passages in Shakespeare; they are perfect,

their simplicity being a *poetical* simplicity. They are the golden, easeful, crowning moments of a manner which is always pitched in another key from that of prose, a manner changed and heightened; the Elizabethan style, regnant in most of our dramatic poetry to this day, is mainly the continuation of this manner of Shakespeare's. It was a manner much more turbid and strewn with blemishes than the manner of Pindar, Dante, or Milton; often it was detestable; but it owed its existence to Shakespeare's instinctive impulse towards *style* in poetry, to his native sense of the necessity for it; and without the basis of style everywhere, faulty though it may in some places be, we should not have had the beauty of expression, unsurpassable for effectiveness and charm, which is reached in Shakespeare's best passages. The turn for style is perceptible all through English poetry, proving, to my mind, the genuine poetical gift of the race; this turn imparts to our poetry a stamp of high distinction, and sometimes it doubles the force of a poet not by nature of the very highest order, such as Gray, and raises him to a rank beyond what his natural richness and power seem to promise. Goethe, with his fine critical perception, saw clearly enough both the power of style in itself, and the lack of style in the literature of his own country; and perhaps if we regard him solely as a German, not as a European, his great work was that he labored all his life to impart style into German literature, and firmly to establish it there. Hence the immense importance to him of the world of classical art, and of the productions of Greek or Latin genius, where style so eminently manifests its power. Had he found in the German genius and literature an element of style existing by nature and ready to his hand, half his work, one may say, would have been saved him,

and he might have done much more in poetry. But as it was, he had to try and create, out of his own powers, a style for German poetry, as well as to provide contents for this style to carry; and thus his labor as a poet was doubled.

It is to be observed that power of style, in the sense in which I am here speaking of style, is something quite different from the power of idiomatic, simple, nervous, racy expression, such as the expression of healthy, robust natures so often is, such as Luther's was in a striking degree. Style, in my sense of the word, is a peculiar recasting and heightening, under a certain condition of spiritual excitement, of what a man has to say, in such a manner as to add dignity and distinction to it; and dignity and distinction are not terms which suit many acts or words of Luther. Deeply touched with the *Gemeinheit*[1] which is the bane of his nation, as he is at the same time a grand example of the honesty which is his nation's excellence, he can seldom even show himself brave, resolute, and truthful, without showing a strong dash of coarseness and commonness all the while; the right definition of Luther, as of our own Bunyan, is that he is a Philistine of genius. So Luther's sincere idiomatic German, — such language as this: "Hilf, lieber Gott, wie manchen Jammer habe ich gesehen, dass der gemeine Mann doch so gar nichts weiss von der christlichen Lehre!"— no more proves a power of style in German literature, than Cobbett's[2] sinewy idiomatic English proves it in English literature. Power of style, properly so-called, as manifested in masters of style like Dante or Milton in poetry, Cicero, Bossuet[3] or Bolingbroke[4] in prose, is something quite different, and has, as I have said, for its characteristic effect, this: to add dignity and distinction.

. . . . . .

This something is *style*, and the Celts certainly have it in a wonderful measure. Style is the most striking quality of their poetry. Celtic poetry seems to make up to itself for being unable to master the world and give an adequate interpretation of it, by throwing all its force into style, by bending language at any rate to its will, and expressing the ideas it has with unsurpassable intensity, elevation, and effect. It has all through it a sort of intoxication of style — a *Pindarism*, to use a word formed from the name of the poet, on whom, above all other poets, the power of style seems to have exercised an inspiring and intoxicating effect; and not in its great poets only, in Taliesin, or Llywarch Hen, or Ossian,[1] does the Celtic genius show this Pindarism, but in all its productions: —

"The grave of March is this, and this the grave of Gwythyr;
Here is the grave of Gwgawn Gleddyfreidd;
But unknown is the grave of Arthur." [2]

That comes from the Welsh *Memorials of the Graves of the Warriors*, and if we compare it with the familiar memorial inscriptions of an English churchyard (for we English have so much Germanism in us that our productions offer abundant examples of German want of style as well as of its opposite): —

"Afflictions sore long time I bore,
Physicians were in vain,
Till God did please Death should me seize
And ease me of my pain —"

if, I say, we compare the Welsh memorial lines with the English, which in their *Gemeinheit* of style are truly Germanic, we shall get a clear sense of what that Celtic talent for style I have been speaking of is.

. . . . . .

Its chord of penetrating passion and melancholy,

again, its *Titanism* as we see it in Byron, — what other European poetry possesses that like the English, and where do we get it from? The Celts, with their vehement reaction against the despotism of fact, with their sensuous nature, their manifold striving, their adverse destiny, their immense calamities, the Celts are the prime authors of this vein of piercing regret and passion, — of this Titanism in poetry. A famous book, Macpherson's *Ossian*,[1] carried in the last century this vein like a flood of lava through Europe. I am not going to criticize Macpherson's *Ossian* here. Make the part of what is forged, modern, tawdry, spurious, in the book, as large as you please; strip Scotland, if you like, of every feather of borrowed plumes which on the strength of Macpherson's *Ossian* she may have stolen from that *vetus et major Scotia*, the true home of the Ossianic poetry, Ireland; I make no objection. But there will still be left in the book a residue with the very soul of the Celtic genius in it, and which has the proud distinction of having brought this soul of the Celtic genius into contact with the genius of the nations of modern Europe, and enriched all our poetry by it. Woody Morven, and echoing Sora, and Selma with its silent halls! — we all owe them a debt of gratitude, and when we are unjust enough to forget it, may the Muse forget us! Choose any one of the better passages in Macpherson's *Ossian* and you can see even at this time of day what an apparition of newness and power such a strain must have been to the eighteenth century: —

"I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fox looked out from the windows, the rank grass of the wall waved round her head. Raise the song of mourning, O bards, over the land of strangers. They have but fallen before us, for one day

we must fall. Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy towers to-day; yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes; it howls in thy empty court, and whistles round thy half-worn shield. Let the blast of the desert come! we shall be renowned in our day."

All Europe felt the power of that melancholy; but what I wish to point out is, that no nation of Europe so caught in its poetry the passionate penetrating accent of the Celtic genius, its strain of Titanism, as the English. Goethe, like Napoleon, felt the spell of Ossian very powerfully, and he quotes a long passage from him in his *Werther*.[1] But what is there Celtic, turbulent, and Titanic about the German Werther, that amiable, cultivated and melancholy young man, having for his sorrow and suicide the perfectly definite motive that Lotte cannot be his? Faust, again, has nothing unaccountable, defiant, and Titanic in him; his knowledge does not bring him the satisfaction he expected from it, and meanwhile he finds himself poor and growing old, and balked of the palpable enjoyment of life; and here is the motive for Faust's discontent. In the most energetic and impetuous of Goethe's creations, — his *Prometheus*,[2] — it is not Celtic self-will and passion, it is rather the Germanic sense of justice and reason, which revolts against the despotism of Zeus. The German *Sehnsucht* itself is a wistful, soft, tearful longing, rather than a struggling, fierce, passionate one. But the Celtic melancholy is struggling, fierce, passionate; to catch its note, listen to Llywarch Hen in old age, addressing his crutch: —

"O my crutch! is it not autumn, when the fern is red, the water-flag yellow? Have I not hated that which I love?

O my crutch! is it not winter-time now, when men

talk together after that they have drunken? Is not the side of my bed left desolate?

O my crutch! is it not spring, when the cuckoo passes through the air, when the foam sparkles on the sea? The young maidens no longer love me.

O my crutch! is it not the first day of May? The furrows, are they not shining; the young corn, is it not springing? Ah! the sight of thy handle makes me wroth.

O my crutch! stand straight, thou wilt support me the better; it is very long since I was Llywarch.

Behold old age, which makes sport of me, from the hair of my head to my teeth, to my eyes, which women loved.

The four things I have all my life most hated fall upon me together, — coughing and old age, sickness and sorrow.

I am old, I am alone, shapeliness and warmth are gone from me; the couch of honor shall be no more mine; I am miserable, I am bent on my crutch.

How evil was the lot allotted to Llywarch, the night when he was brought forth! sorrows without end, and no deliverance from his burden." [1]

There is the Titanism of the Celt, his passionate, turbulent, indomitable reaction against the despotism of fact; and of whom does it remind us so much as of Byron?

> "The fire which on my bosom preys
> Is lone as some volcanic isle;
> No torch is kindled at its blaze;
> A funeral pile!" [2]

Or, again: —

> "Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
> Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
> And know, whatever thou hast been,
> 'Tis something better not to be." [3]

One has only to let one's memory begin to fetch passages from Byron striking the same note as that passage from Llywarch Hen, and she will not soon stop. And all Byron's heroes, not so much in collision with outward things, as breaking on some rock of revolt and misery in the depths of their own nature; Manfred, self-consumed, fighting blindly and passionately with I know not what, having nothing of the consistent development and intelligible motive of Faust, — Manfred, Lara, Cain,[1] what are they but Titanic? Where in European poetry are we to find this Celtic passion of revolt so warm-breathing, puissant, and sincere; except perhaps in the creation of a yet greater poet than Byron, but an English poet, too, like Byron, — in the Satan of Milton?

> ". . . What though the field be lost?
> All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield,
> And what is else not to be overcome."[2]

There, surely, speaks a genius to whose composition the Celtic fibre was not wholly a stranger!

. . . . . .

The Celt's quick feeling for what is noble and distinguished gave his poetry style; his indomitable personality gave it pride and passion; his sensibility and nervous exaltation gave it a better gift still, the gift of rendering with wonderful felicity the magical charm of nature. The forest solitude, the bubbling spring, the wild flowers, are everywhere in romance. They have a mysterious life and grace there; they are Nature's own children, and utter her secret in a way which makes them something quite different from the woods, waters, and plants of Greek and Latin poetry. Now of this delicate magic, Celtic romance is so pre-

eminent a mistress, that it seems impossible to believe the power did not come into romance from the Celts.[1] Magic is just the word for it, — the magic of nature; not merely the beauty of nature, — that the Greeks and Latins had; not merely an honest smack of the soil, a faithful realism, — that the Germans had; but the intimate life of Nature, her weird power and her fairy charm. As the Saxon names of places, with the pleasant wholesome smack of the soil in them, — Weathersfield, Thaxted, Shalford, — are to the Celtic names of places, with their penetrating, lofty beauty, — Velindra, Tyntagel, Caernarvon, — so is the homely realism of German and Norse nature to the fairy-like loveliness of Celtic nature. Gwydion wants a wife for his pupil: "Well," says Math, "we will seek, I and thou, by charms and illusions, to form a wife for him out of flowers. So they took the blossoms of the oak, and the blossoms of the broom, and the blossoms of the meadow-sweet, and produced from them a maiden, the fairest and most graceful that man ever saw. And they baptized her, and gave her the name of Flower-Aspect."[2] Celtic romance is full of exquisite touches like that, showing the delicacy of the Celt's feeling in these matters, and how deeply Nature lets him come into her secrets. The quick dropping of blood is called "faster than the fall of the dewdrop from the blade of reed-grass upon the earth, when the dew of June is at the heaviest." And thus is Olwen described: "More yellow was her hair than the flower of the broom, and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood-anemony amidst the spray of the meadow fountains."[3] For loveliness it would be hard to beat that; and for magical clearness and nearness take the following: —

"And in the evening Peredur entered a valley, and at the head of the valley he came to a hermit's cell, and the hermit welcomed him gladly, and there he spent the night. And in the morning he arose, and when he went forth, behold, a shower of snow had fallen the night before, and a hawk had killed a wild-fowl in front of the cell. And the noise of the horse scared the hawk away, and a raven alighted upon the bird. And Peredur stood and compared the blackness of the raven, and the whiteness of the snow, and the redness of the blood, to the hair of the lady whom best he loved, which was blacker than the raven, and to her skin, which was whiter than the snow, and to her two cheeks which were redder than the blood upon the snow appeared to be."[1]

And this, which is perhaps less striking, is not less beautiful: —

"And early in the day Geraint and Enid left the wood, and they came to an open country, with meadows on one hand and mowers mowing the meadows. And there was a river before them, and the horses bent down and drank the water. And they went up out of the river by a steep bank, and there they met a slender stripling with a satchel about his neck; and he had a small blue pitcher in his hand, and a bowl on the mouth of the pitcher."[2]

And here the landscape, up to this point so Greek in its clear beauty, is suddenly magicalized by the romance touch, —

"And they saw a tall tree by the side of the river, one-half of which was in flames from the root to the top, and the other half was green and in full leaf."

Magic is the word to insist upon, — a magically vivid and near interpretation of nature; since it is this which constitutes the special charm and power of the

effect I am calling attention to, and it is for this that the Celt's sensibility gives him a peculiar aptitude. But the matter needs rather fine handling, and it is easy to make mistakes here in our criticism. In the first place, Europe tends constantly to become more and more one community, and we tend to become Europeans instead of merely Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Italians; so whatever aptitude or felicity one people imparts into spiritual work, gets imitated by the others, and thus tends to become the common property of all. Therefore anything so beautiful and attractive as the natural magic I am speaking of, is sure, nowadays, if it appears in the productions of the Celts, or of the English, or of the French, to appear in the productions of the Germans also, or in the productions of the Italians; but there will be a stamp of perfectness and inimitableness about it in the literatures where it is native, which it will not have in the literatures where it is not native. Novalis[1] or Rückert,[2] for instance, have their eye fixed on nature, and have undoubtedly a feeling for natural magic; a rough-and-ready critic easily credits them and the Germans with the Celtic fineness of tact, the Celtic nearness to nature and her secret; but the question is whether the strokes in the German's picture of nature[3] have ever the indefinable delicacy, charm, and perfection of the Celt's touch in the pieces I just now quoted, or of Shakespeare's touch in his daffodil,[4] Wordsworth's in his cuckoo,[5] Keats's in his Autumn, Obermann's in his mountain birch-tree, or his Easter-daisy among the Swiss farms.[6] To decide where the gift for natural magic originally lies, whether it is properly Celtic or Germanic, we must decide this question.

In the second place, there are many ways of handling nature, and we are here only concerned with one

of them; but a rough-and-ready critic imagines that it is all the same so long as nature is handled at all, and fails to draw the needful distinction between modes of handling her. But these modes are many; I will mention four of them now: there is the conventional way of handling nature, there is the faithful way of handling nature, there is the Greek way of handling nature, there is the magical way of handling nature. In all these three last the eye is on the object, but with a difference; in the faithful way of handling nature, the eye is on the object, and that is all you can say; in the Greek, the eye is on the object, but lightness and brightness are added; in the magical, the eye is on the object, but charm and magic are added. In the conventional way of handling nature, the eye is not on the object; what that means we all know, we have only to think of our eighteenth-century poetry: —

"As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night—"[1]

to call up any number of instances. Latin poetry supplies plenty of instances too; if we put this from Propertius's *Hylas*: —

". . . manus heroum . . .
Mollia composita litora fronde tegit—"[2]

side by side with the line of Theocritus by which it was suggested: —

λειμὼν γάρ σφιν ἔκειτο μέγας, στιβάδεσσιν ὄνειαρ—[3]

we get at the same moment a good specimen both of the conventional and of the Greek way of handling nature. But from our own poetry we may get specimens of the Greek way of handling nature, as well as of the conventional: for instance, Keats's: —

"What little town by river or seashore,
Or mountain-built with quiet citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?"[4]

is Greek, as Greek as a thing from Homer or Theocritus; it is composed with the eye on the object, a radiancy and light clearness being added. German poetry abounds in specimens of the faithful way of handling nature; an excellent example is to be found in the stanzas called *Zueignung*[1], prefixed to Goethe's poems; the morning walk, the mist, the dew, the sun, are as faithful as they can be, they are given with the eye on the object, but there the merit of the work, as a handling of nature, stops; neither Greek radiance nor Celtic magic is added; the power of these is not what gives the poem in question its merit, but a power of quite another kind, a power of moral and spiritual emotion. But the power of Greek radiance Goethe could give to his handling of nature, and nobly too, as any one who will read his *Wanderer*, — the poem in which a wanderer falls in with a peasant woman and her child by their hut, built out of the ruins of a temple near Cuma, — may see. Only the power of natural magic Goethe does not, I think, give; whereas Keats passes at will from the Greek power to that power which is, as I say, Celtic; from his

> "What little town, by river or seashore —"

to his

> "White hawthorn and the pastoral eglantine,
> Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves —"[2]

or his

> ". . . magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn —"[3]

in which the very same note is struck as in those extracts which I quoted from Celtic romance, and struck with authentic and unmistakable power.

Shakespeare, in handling nature, touches this Celtic note so exquisitely, that perhaps one is inclined to be always looking for the Celtic note in him, and not to recognize his Greek note when it comes. But if one

attends well to the difference between the two notes, and bears in mind, to guide one, such things as Virgil's "moss-grown springs and grass softer than sleep:" —

> "Muscosi fontes et somno mollior herba —"[1]

as his charming flower-gatherer, who —

> "Pallentes violas et summa papavera carpens
> Narcissum et florem jungit bene olentis anethi —"[2]

as his quinces and chestnuts: —

> ". . . cana legam tenera lanugine mala
> Castaneasque nuces . . ."[3]

then, I think, we shall be disposed to say that in Shakespeare's

> "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
> Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
> Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
> With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine —"[4]

it is mainly a Greek note which is struck. Then, again in his

> ". . . look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold!"[5]

we are at the very point of transition from the Greek note to the Celtic; there is the Greek clearness and brightness, with the Celtic aërialness and magic coming in. Then we have the sheer, inimitable Celtic note in passages like this: —

> "Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
> By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
> Or in the beached margent of the sea —"[6]

or this, the last I will quote: —

> "The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,
> When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
> And they did make no noise, in such a night
> Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls —
>
> . . . in such a night
> Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew —

. . . in such a night
Stood Dido, with a willow in her hand,
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waved her love
To come again to Carthage." [1]

And those last lines of all are so drenched and intoxicated with the fairy-dew of that natural magic which is our theme, that I cannot do better than end with them.

And now, with the pieces of evidence in our hand, let us go to those who say it is vain to look for Celtic elements in any Englishman, and let us ask them, first, if they seize what we mean by the power of natural magic in Celtic poetry: secondly, if English poetry does not eminently exhibit this power; and, thirdly, where they suppose English poetry got it from?

Celtic lightness and magic.

GEORGE SAND[1]

THE months go round, and anniversaries return; on the ninth of June George Sand will have been dead just one year. She was born in 1804; she was almost seventy-two years old when she died. She came to Paris after the revolution of 1830, with her *Indiana*[2] written, and began her life of independence, her life of authorship, her life as *George Sand*. She continued at work till she died. For forty-five years she was writing and publishing, and filled Europe with her name.

It seems to me but the other day that I saw her, yet it was in the August of 1846, more than thirty years ago. I saw her in her own Berry, at Nohant,[3] where her childhood and youth were passed, where she returned to live after she became famous, where she died and has now her grave. There must be many who, after reading her books, have felt the same desire which in those days of my youth, in 1846, took me to Nohant, — the desire to see the country and the places of which the books that so charmed us were full. Those old provinces of the centre of France, primitive and slumbering, — Berry, La Marche, Bourbonnais; those sites and streams in them, of name once so indifferent to us, but to which George Sand gave such a music for our ear, — La Châtre, Ste. Sévère, the *Vallée Noire*, the Indre, the Creuse; how many a reader of George Sand must have desired, as I did, after frequenting them so much in thought, fairly to set eyes upon them!

I had been reading *Jeanne*.[4] I made up my mind to go and see Toulx Ste. Croix, Boussac, and the Druidical stones on Mont Barlot, the *Pierres Jaunâtres*.[5]

I remember looking out Toulx in Cassini's great map[1] at the Bodleian Library. The railway through the centre of France went in those days no farther than Vierzon. From Vierzon to Châteauroux one travelled by an ordinary diligence, from Châteauroux to La Châtre by a humbler diligence, from La Châtre to Boussac by the humblest diligence of all. At Boussac diligence ended, and *patache*[2] began. Between Châteauroux and La Châtre, a mile or two before reaching the latter place, the road passes by the village of Nohant. The Château of Nohant, in which Madame Sand lived, is a plain house by the road-side, with a walled garden. Down in the meadows, not far off, flows the Indre, bordered by trees. I passed Nohant without stopping, at La Châtre I dined and changed diligence, and went on by night up the valley of the Indre, the *Vallée Noire*, past Ste. Sévère to Boussac. At Ste. Sévère the Indre is quite a small stream. In the darkness we quitted its valley, and when day broke we were in the wilder and barer country of La Marche, with Boussac before us, and its high castle on a precipitous rock over the Little Creuse.

That day and the next I wandered through a silent country of heathy and ferny *landes*,[3] a region of granite boulders, holly, and broom, of copsewood and great chestnut trees; a region of broad light, and fresh breezes and wide horizons. I visited the *Pierres Jaunâtres*. I stood at sunset on the platform of Toulx Ste. Croix, by the scrawled and almost effaced stone lions, — a relic, it is said, of the English rule, — and gazed on the blue mountains of Auvergne filling the distance, and southeastward of them, in a still further and fainter distance, on what seemed to be the mountains over Le Puy and the high valley of the Loire.

From Boussac I addressed to Madame Sand the

sort of letter of which she must in her lifetime have had scores, a letter conveying to her, in bad French, the homage of a youthful and enthusiastic foreigner who had read her works with delight. She received the infliction good-naturedly, for on my return to La Châtre I found a message left at the inn by a servant from Nohant that Madame Sand would be glad to see me if I called. The mid-day breakfast at Nohant was not yet over when I reached the house, and I found a large party assembled. I entered with some trepidation, as well I might, considering how I had got there; but the simplicity of Madame Sand's manner put me at ease in a moment. She named some of those present; amongst them were her son and daughter, the Maurice and Solange[1] so familiar to us from her books, and Chopin[2] with his wonderful eyes. There was at that time nothing astonishing in Madame Sand's appearance. She was not in man's clothes, she wore a sort of costume not impossible, I should think (although on these matters I speak with hesitation), to members of the fair sex at this hour amongst ourselves, as an outdoor dress for the country or for Scotland. She made me sit by her and poured out for me the insipid and depressing beverage, *boisson fade et mélancolique*, as Balzac called it, for which English people are thought abroad to be always thirsting, — tea. She conversed of the country through which I had been wandering, of the Berry peasants and their mode of life, of Switzerland, whither I was going; she touched politely, by a few questions and remarks, upon England and things and persons English, — upon Oxford and Cambridge, Byron, Bulwer. As she spoke, her eyes, head, bearing, were all of them striking; but the main impression she made was an impression of what I have already mentioned, — of *simplicity*, frank, cordial simplicity. After

breakfast she led the way into the garden, asked me a few kind questions about myself and my plans, gathered a flower or two and gave them to me, shook hands heartily at the gate, and I saw her no more. In 1859 M. Michelet[1] gave me a letter to her, which would have enabled me to present myself in more regular fashion. Madame Sand was then in Paris. But a day or two passed before I could call, and when I called, Madame Sand had left Paris and had gone back to Nohant. The impression of 1846 has remained my single impression of her.

Of her gaze, form, and speech, that one impression is enough; better perhaps than a mixed impression from seeing her at sundry times and after successive changes. But as the first anniversary of her death[2] draws near, there arises again a desire which I felt when she died, the desire, not indeed to take a critical survey of her, — very far from it. I feel no inclination at all to go regularly through her productions, to classify and value them one by one, to pick out from them what the English public may most like, or to present to that public, for the most part ignorant of George Sand and for the most part indifferent to her, a full history and a judicial estimate of the woman and of her writings. But I desire to recall to my own mind, before the occasion offered by her death passes quite away, — to recall and collect the elements of that powerful total-impression which, as a writer, she made upon me; to recall and collect them, to bring them distinctly into view, to feel them in all their depth and power once more. What I here attempt is not for the benefit of the indifferent; it is for my own satisfaction, it is for myself. But perhaps those for whom George Sand has been a friend and a power will find an interest in following me.

Le sentiment de la vie idéale, qui n'est autre que la vie normale telle que nous sommes appelés à la connaître ;[1] — "the sentiment of the ideal life, which is none other than man's normal life as we shall some day know it," — those words from one of her last publications give the ruling thought of George Sand, the ground-*motive*, as they say in music, of all her strain. It is as a personage inspired by this motive that she interests us.

The English public conceives of her as of a novel-writer who wrote stories more or less interesting ; the earlier ones objectionable and dangerous, the later ones, some of them, unexceptionable and fit to be put into the hands of the youth of both sexes. With such a conception of George Sand, a story of hers like *Consuelo*[2] comes to be elevated in England into quite an undue relative importance, and to pass with very many people for her typical work, displaying all that is really valuable and significant in the author. *Consuelo* is a charming story. But George Sand is something more than a maker of charming stories, and only a portion of her is shown in *Consuelo*. She is more, likewise, than a creator of characters. She has created, with admirable truth to nature, characters most attractive and attaching, such as Edmée, Geneviève, Germain.[3] But she is not adequately expressed by them. We do not know her unless we feel the spirit which goes through her work as a whole.

In order to feel this spirit it is not, indeed, necessary to read all that she ever produced. Even three or four only out of her many books might suffice to show her to us, if they were well chosen ; let us say, the *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, *Mauprat*, *François le Champi*,[4] and a story which I was glad to see Mr. Myers,[5] in his appreciative notice of Madame Sand,

single out for praise, — *Valvèdre*.[1] In these may be found all the principal elements of their author's strain: the cry of agony and revolt, the trust in nature and beauty, the aspiration towards a purged and renewed human society.

Of George Sand's strain, during forty years, these are the grand elements. Now it is one of them which appears most prominently, now it is another. The cry of agony and revolt is in her earlier work only, and passes away in her later. But in the evolution of these three elements,— the passion of agony and revolt, the consolation from nature and from beauty, the ideas of social renewal, — in the evolution of these is George Sand and George Sand's life and power. Through their evolution her constant motive declares and unfolds itself, that motive which we have set forth above: "the sentiment of the ideal life, which is none other than man's normal life as we shall one day know it." This is the motive, and through these elements is its evolution; an evolution pursued, moreover, with the most unfailing resolve, the most absolute sincerity.

The hour of agony and revolt passed away for George Sand, as it passed away for Goethe, as it passes away for their readers likewise. It passes away and does not return; yet those who, amid the agitations, more or less stormy, of their youth, betook themselves to the early works of George Sand, may in later life cease to read them, indeed, but they can no more forget them than they can forget *Werther*.[2] George Sand speaks somewhere of her "days of *Corinne*."[3] Days of *Valentine*, many of us may in like manner say, — days of *Valentine*, days of *Lélia*,[4] days never to return! They are gone, we shall read the books no more, and yet how ineffaceable is their impression! How the sentences from George Sand's works of that period still linger

in our memory and haunt the ear with their cadences! Grandiose and moving, they come, those cadences, like the sighing of the wind through the forest, like the breaking of the waves on the seashore. Lélia in her cell on the mountain of the Camaldoli —

"Sibyl, Sibyl forsaken; spirit of the days of old, joined to a brain which rebels against the divine inspiration; broken lyre, mute instrument, whose tones the world of to-day, if it heard them, could not understand, but yet in whose depth the eternal harmony murmurs imprisoned; priestess of death, I, I who feel and know that before now I have been Pythia, have wept before now, before now have spoken, but who cannot recollect, alas, cannot utter the word of healing! Yes, yes! I remember the cavern of truth and the access of revelation; but the word of human destiny, I have forgotten it; but the talisman of deliverance, it is lost from my hand. And yet, indeed, much, much have I seen! and when suffering presses me sore, when indignation takes hold of me, when I feel Prometheus wake up in my heart and beat his puissant wings against the stone which confines him, — oh! then, in prey to a frenzy without a name, to a despair without bounds, I invoke the unknown master and friend who might illumine my spirit and set free my tongue; but I grope in darkness, and my tired arms grasp nothing save delusive shadows. And for ten thousand years, as the sole answer to my cries, as the sole comfort in my agony, I hear astir, over this earth accurst, the despairing sob of impotent agony. For ten thousand years I have cried in infinite space: *Truth! Truth!* For ten thousand years infinite space keeps answering me: *Desire, Desire.* O Sibyl forsaken! O mute Pythia! dash then thy head against the rocks of thy cavern, and mingle thy raging blood with the foam of the sea;

for thou deemest thyself to have possessed the almighty Word, and these ten thousand years thou art seeking him in vain." [1]

Or Sylvia's cry over Jacques [2] by his glacier in the Tyrol—

"When such a man as thou art is born into a world where he can do no true service; when, with the soul of an apostle and the courage of a martyr, he has simply to push his way among the heartless and aimless crowds which vegetate without living; the atmosphere suffocates him and he dies. Hated by sinners, the mock of fools, disliked by the envious, abandoned by the weak, what can he do but return to God, weary with having labored in vain, in sorrow at having accomplished nothing? The world remains in all its vileness and in all its hatefulness; this is what men call, 'the triumph of good sense over enthusiasm.'" [3]

Or Jacques himself, and his doctrine—

"Life is arid and terrible, repose is a dream, prudence is useless; mere reason alone serves simply to dry up the heart; there is but one virtue, the eternal sacrifice of oneself."

Or George Sand speaking in her own person, in the *Lettres d'un Voyageur*—

"Ah, no, I was not born to be a poet, I was born to love. It is the misfortune of my destiny, it is the enmity of others, which have made me a wanderer and an artist. What I wanted was to live a human life; I had a heart, it has been torn violently from my breast. All that has been left me is a head, a head full of noise and pain, of horrible memories, of images of woe, of scenes of outrage. And because in writing stories to earn my bread I could not help remembering my sorrows, because I had the audacity to say that in married life there were to be found miserable beings, by

reason of the weakness which is enjoined upon the woman, by reason of the brutality which is permitted to the man, by reason of the turpitudes which society covers and protects with a veil, I am pronounced immoral, I am treated as if I were the enemy of the human race." [1]

If only, alas, together with her honesty and her courage, she could feel within herself that she had also light and hope and power; that she was able to lead those whom she loved, and who looked to her for guidance! But no; her very own children, witnesses of her suffering, her uncertainty, her struggles, her evil report, may come to doubt her:—

"My poor children, my own flesh and blood, will perhaps turn upon me and say: 'You are leading us wrong, you mean to ruin us as well as yourself. Are you not unhappy, reprobated, evil spoken of? What have you gained by these unequal struggles, by these much trumpeted duels of yours with custom and belief? Let us do as others do; let us get what is to be got out of this easy and tolerant world.'

"This is what they will say to me. Or at best, if, out of tenderness for me, or from their own natural disposition, they give ear to my words and believe me, whither shall I guide them? Into what abysses shall we go and plunge ourselves, we three?—for we shall be our own three upon earth, and not one soul with us. What shall I reply to them if they come and say to me; 'Yes, life is unbearable in a world like this. Let us die together. Show us the path of Bernica, or the lake of Sténio, or the glaciers of Jacques.'" [2]

Nevertheless the failure of the impassioned seekers of a new and better world proves nothing, George Sand maintains, for the world as it is. Ineffectual they may be, but the world is still more ineffectual,

and it is the world's course which is doomed to ruin, not theirs. "What has it done," exclaims George Sand in her preface to Guérin's *Centaure*, "what has it done for our moral education, and what is it doing for our children, this society shielded with such care?" Nothing. Those whom it calls vain complainers and rebels and madmen, may reply: —

"Suffer us to bewail our martyrs, poets without a country that we are, forlorn singers, well versed in the causes of their misery and of our own. You do not comprehend the malady which killed them; they themselves did not comprehend it. If one or two of us at the present day open our eyes to a new light, is it not by a strange and unaccountable good Providence; and have we not to seek our grain of faith in storm and darkness, combated by doubt, irony, the absence of all sympathy, all example, all brotherly aid, all protection and countenance in high places? Try yourselves to speak to your brethren heart to heart, conscience to conscience! Try it! — but you cannot, busied as you are with watching and patching up in all directions your dykes which the flood is invading. The material existence of this society of yours absorbs all your care, and requires more than all your efforts. Meanwhile the powers of human thought are growing into strength, and rise on all sides around you. Amongst these threatening apparitions, there are some which fade away and reënter the darkness, because the hour of life has not yet struck, and the fiery spirit which quickened them could strive no longer with the horrors of this present chaos; but there are others that can wait, and you will find them confronting you, up and alive, to say: 'You have allowed the death of our brethren, and we, we do not mean to die.'"

She did not, indeed. How should she faint and fail

before her time, because of a world out of joint, because of the reign of stupidity, because of the passions of youth, because of the difficulties and disgusts of married life in the native seats of the *homme sensuel moyen*, the average sensual man, she who could feel so well the power of those eternal consolers, nature and beauty? From the very first they introduce a note of suavity in her strain of grief and passion. Who can forget the lanes and meadows of *Valentine?*

George Sand is one of the few French writers who keep us closely and truly intimate with rural nature. She gives us the wild-flowers by their actual names, — snowdrop, primrose, columbine, iris, scabious. Nowhere has she touched her native Berry and its little-known landscape, its *campagnes ignorées*, with a lovelier charm than in *Valentine*. The winding and deep lanes running out of the high road on either side, the fresh and calm spots they take us to, "meadows of a tender green, plaintive brooks, clumps of alder and mountain ash, a whole world of suave and pastoral nature," — how delicious it all is! The grave and silent peasant whose very dog will hardly deign to bark at you, the great white ox, "the unfailing dean of these pastures," staring solemnly at you from the thicket; the farmhouse "with its avenue of maples, and the Indre, here hardly more than a bright rivulet, stealing along through rushes and yellow iris, in the field below," — who, I say, can forget them? And that one lane in especial, the lane where Athénaïs puts her arm out of the side window of the rustic carriage and gathers May from the overarching hedge, — that lane with its startled blackbirds, and humming insects, and limpid water, and swaying water-plants, and shelving gravel, and yellow wagtails hopping, half-pert, half-frightened, on the sand, — that lane with its rushes, cresses, and mint below, its honeysuckle and traveller's-

joy above,—how gladly might one give all that strangely English picture in English, if the charm of Madame Sand's language did not here defy translation! Let us try something less difficult, and yet something where we may still have her in this her beloved world of "simplicity, and sky, and fields and trees, and peasant life, — peasant life looked at, by preference, on its good and sound side." *Voyez donc la simplicité, vous autres, voyez le ciel et les champs, et les arbres, et les paysans, surtout dans ce qu'ils ont de bon et de vrai.*

The introduction to *La Mare au Diable* will give us what we want. George Sand has been looking at an engraving of Holbein's *Laborer.*[1] An old thick-set peasant, in rags, is driving his plough in the midst of a field. All around spreads a wild landscape, dotted with a few poor huts. The sun is setting behind a hill; the day of toil is nearly over. It has been a hard one; the ground is rugged and stony, the laborer's horses are but skin and bone, weak and exhausted. There is but one alert figure, the skeleton Death, who with a whip skips nimbly along at the horses' side and urges the team. Under the picture is a quotation in old French, to the effect that after the laborer's life of travail and service, in which he has to gain his bread by the sweat of his brow, here comes Death to fetch him away. And from so rude a life does Death take him, says George Sand, that Death is hardly unwelcome; and in another composition by Holbein, where men of almost every condition, — popes, sovereigns, lovers, gamblers, monks, soldiers, — are taunted with their fear of Death and do indeed see his approach with terror, Lazarus alone is easy and composed, and sitting on his dunghill at the rich man's door, tells Death that he does not dread him.

With her thoughts full of Holbein's mouruful

picture, George Sand goes out into the fields of her own Berry: —

"My walk was by the border of a field which some peasants were getting ready for being sown presently. The space to be ploughed was wide, as in Holbein's picture. The landscape was vast also; the great lines of green which it contained were just touched with russet by the approach of autumn; on the rich brown soil recent rain had left, in a good many furrows, lines of water, which shone in the sun like silver threads. The day was clear and soft, and the earth gave out a light smoke where it had been freshly laid open by the ploughshare. At the top of the field an old man, whose broad back and severe face were like those of the old peasant of Holbein, but whose clothes told no tale of poverty, was gravely driving his plough of an antique shape, drawn by two tranquil oxen, with coats of a pale buff, real patriarchs of the fallow, tall of make, somewhat thin, with long and backward-sloping horns, the kind of old workmen who by habit have got to be *brothers* to one another, as throughout our country-side they are called, and who, if one loses the other, refuse to work with a new comrade, and fret themselves to death. People unacquainted with the country will not believe in this affection of the ox for his yoke-fellow. They should come and see one of the poor beasts in a corner of his stable, thin, wasted, lashing with his restless tail his lean flanks, blowing uneasily and fastidiously on the provender offered to him, his eyes forever turned towards the stable door, scratching with his foot the empty place left at his side, sniffing the yokes and bands which his companion has worn, and incessantly calling for him with piteous lowings. The ox-herd will tell you: There is a pair of oxen done for! his *brother* is dead, and this one will work no more. He ought to

be fattened for killing; but we cannot get him to eat, and in a short time he will have starved himself to death."[1]

How faithful and close it is, this contact of George Sand with country things, with the life of nature in its vast plenitude and pathos! And always in the end the human interest, as is right, emerges and predominates. What is the central figure in the fresh and calm rural world of George Sand? It is the peasant. And what is the peasant? He is France, life, the future. And this is the strength of George Sand, and of her second movement, after the first movement of energy and revolt was over, towards nature and beauty, towards the country, towards primitive life, the peasant. She regarded nature and beauty, not with the selfish and solitary joy of the artist who but seeks to appropriate them for his own purposes, she regarded them as a treasure of immense and hitherto unknown application, as a vast power of healing and delight for all, and for the peasant first and foremost. Yes, she cries, the simple life is the true one! but the peasant, the great organ of that life, "the minister in that vast temple which only the sky is vast enough to embrace," the peasant is not doomed to toil and moil in it forever, overdone and unawakened, like Holbein's laborer, and to have for his best comfort the thought that death will set him free. *Non, nous n'avons plus affaire à la mort, mais à la vie.*[2] "Our business henceforth is not with death, but with life."

Joy is the great lifter of men, the great unfolder. *Il faut que la vie soit bonne afin qu'elle soit féconde.* "For life to be fruitful, life must be felt as a blessing": —

"Nature is eternally young, beautiful, bountiful. She pours out beauty and poetry for all that live, she

pours it out on all plants, and the plants are permitted to expand in it freely. She possesses the secret of happiness, and no man has been able to take it away from her. (The happiest of men would be he who possessing the science of his labor and working with his hands, earning his comfort and his freedom by the exercise of his intelligent force, found time to live by the heart and by the brain, to understand his own work and to love the work of God.) The artist has satisfactions of this kind in the contemplation and reproduction of nature's beauty; but when he sees the affliction of those who people this paradise of earth, the upright and human-hearted artist feels a trouble in the midst of his enjoyment. The happy day will be when mind, heart, and hands shall be alive together, shall work in concert; when there shall be a harmony between God's munificence and man's delight in it. Then, instead of the piteous and frightful figure of Death, skipping along whip in hand by the peasant's side in the field, the allegorical painter will place there a radiant angel, sowing with full hands the blessed grain in the smoking furrow.

"And the dream of a kindly, free, poetic, laborious, simple existence for the tiller of the field is not so hard to realize that it must be banished into the world of chimæras. Virgil's sweet and sad cry: 'O happy peasants, if they but knew their own blessings!' is a regret; but like all regrets, it is at the same time a prediction. The day will come when the laborer may be also an artist; — not in the sense of rendering nature's beauty, a matter which will be then of much less importance, but in the sense of feeling it. Does not this mysterious intuition of poetic beauty exist in him already in the form of instinct and of vague reverie?"[1]

It exists in him, too, adds Madame Sand, in the form of that *nostalgia*, that homesickness, which for ever pursues the genuine French peasant if you transplant him. The peasant has here, then, the elements of the poetic sense, and of its high and pure satisfactions.

"But one part of the enjoyment which we possess is wanting to him, a pure and lofty pleasure which is surely his due, minister that he is in that vast temple which only the sky is vast enough to embrace. He has not the conscious knowledge of his sentiment. Those who have sentenced him to servitude from his mother's womb, not being able to debar him from reverie, have debarred him from reflection.

"Well, for all that, taking the peasant as he is, incomplete and seemingly condemned to an eternal childhood, I yet find him a more beautiful object than the man in whom his acquisition of knowledge has stifled sentiment. Do not rate yourselves so high above him, many of you who imagine that you have an imprescriptible right to his obedience; for you yourselves are the most incomplete and the least seeing of men. That simplicity of his soul is more to be loved than the false lights of yours."[1]

In all this we are passing from the second element in George Sand to the third, — her aspiration for a social new-birth, a *renaissance sociale*. It is eminently the ideal of France; it was hers. Her religion connected itself with this ideal. In the convent where she was brought up, she had in youth had an awakening of fervent mystical piety in the Catholic form. That form she could not keep. Popular religion of all kinds, with its deep internal impossibilities, its "heaven and hell serving to cover the illogical manifestations of the Divinity's apparent designs respecting us," its "God made in our image, silly and malicious, vain

and puerile, irritable or tender, after our fashion," lost all sort of hold upon her: —

"Communion with such a God is impossible to me, I confess it. He is wiped out from my memory: there is no corner where I can find him any more. Nor do I find such a God out of doors either; he is not in the fields and waters, he is not in the starry sky. No, nor yet in the churches where men bow themselves; it is an extinct message, a dead letter, a thought that has done its day. Nothing of this belief, nothing of this God, subsists in me any longer."[1]

She refused to lament over the loss, to esteem it other than a benefit: —

"It is an addition to our stock of light, this detachment from the idolatrous conception of religion. It is no loss of the religious sense, as the persisters in idolatry maintain. It is quite the contrary, it is a restitution of allegiance to the true Divinity. It is a step made in the direction of this Divinity, it is an abjuration of the dogmas which did him dishonor."[2]

She does not attempt to give of this Divinity an account much more precise than that which we have in Wordsworth, — "*a presence that disturbs me with the joy of animating thoughts.*"[3]

"Everything is divine (she says), even matter; everything is superhuman, even man. God is everywhere; he is in me in a measure proportioned to the little that I am. My present life separates me from him just in the degree determined by the actual state of childhood of our race. Let me content myself, in all my seeking, to feel after him, and to possess of him as much as this imperfect soul can take in with the intellectual sense I have."[4]

And she concludes: —

"The day will come when we shall no longer talk

about God idly, nay, when we shall talk about him as little as possible. We shall cease to set him forth dogmatically, to dispute about his nature. We shall put compulsion on no one to pray to him, we shall leave the whole business of worship within the sanctuary of each man's conscience. And this will happen when we are really religious."[1]

Meanwhile the sense of this spirit or presence which animates us, the sense of the divine, is our stronghold and our consolation. A man may say of it: "It comes not by my desert, but the atom of divine sense given to me nothing can rob me of." *Divine sense*, — the phrase is a vague one; but it stands to Madame Sand for that to which are to be referred "all the best thoughts and the best actions of life, suffering endured, duty achieved, whatever purifies our existence, whatever vivifies our love."

Madame Sand is a Frenchwoman, and her religion is therefore, as we might expect, with peculiar fervency social. Always she has before her mind "the natural law which *will have it* (the italics are her own) that the species *man* cannot subsist and prosper but by *association*." Whatever else we may be in creation, we are, first and foremost, "at the head of the species which are called by instinct, and led by necessity, to the life of *association*." The word *love* — the great word, as she justly says, of the New Testament — acquires from her social enthusiasm a peculiar significance to her: —

"The word is a great one, because it involves infinite consequences. To love means to help one another, to have joint aspirations, to act in concert, to labor for the same end, to develop to its ideal consummation the fraternal instinct, thanks to which mankind have brought the earth under their dominion. Every time

that he has been false to this instinct which is his law of life, his natural destiny, man has seen his temples crumble, his societies dissolve, his intellectual sense go wrong, his moral sense die out. The future is founded on love."[1]

So long as love is thus spoken of in the general, the ordinary serious Englishman will have no difficulty in inclining himself with respect while Madame Sand speaks of it. But when he finds that love rhymes, with her, social equality, he will begin to be staggered. And in truth for almost every Englishman Madame Sand's strong language about equality, and about France as the chosen vessel for exhibiting it, will sound exaggerated. "The human ideal," she says, "as well as the social ideal, is to achieve equality."[2] France, which has made equality its rallying cry, is therefore "the nation which loves and is loved," *la nation qui aime et qu'on aime*. The republic of equality is in her eyes "an ideal, a philosophy, a religion." She invokes the "holy doctrine of social liberty and fraternal equality, ever reappearing as a ray of love and truth amidst the storm." She calls it "the goal of man and the law of the future." She thinks it the secret of the civilisation of France, the most civilized of nations. Amid the disasters of the late war she cannot forbear a cry of astonishment at the neutral nations, *insensibles à l'égorgement d'une civilisation comme la nôtre*, "looking on with insensibility while a civilisation such as ours has its throat cut." Germany, with its stupid ideal of corporalism and *Kruppism*, is contrasted with France, full of social dreams, too civilized for war, incapable of planning and preparing war for twenty years, she is so incapable of hatred: — *nous sommes si incapables de haïr!* We seem to be listening, not to George Sand, but to M. Victor Hugo, half genius,

half charlatan; to M. Victor Hugo, or even to one of those French declaimers in whom we come down to no genius and all charlatan.

The form of such outbursts as we have quoted will always be distasteful to an Englishman. It is to be remembered that they came from Madame Sand under the pressure and anguish of the terrible calamities of 1870. But what we are most concerned with, and what Englishmen in general regard too little, is the degree of truth contained in these allegations that France is the most civilized of nations, and that she is so, above all, by her "holy doctrine of equality." How comes the idea to be so current; and to be passionately believed in, as we have seen, by such a woman as George Sand? It was so passionately believed in by her, that when one seeks, as I am now seeking, to recall her image, the image is incomplete if the passionate belief is kept from appearing.

I will not, with my scanty space, now discuss the belief; but I will seek to indicate how it must have commended itself, I think, to George Sand. I have somewhere called France "the country of Europe where *the people* is most alive."[1] *The people* is what interested George Sand. And in France *the people* is, above all, the peasant. The workman in Paris or in other great towns of France may afford material for such pictures as those which M. Zola[2] has lately given us in *L'Assommoir* — pictures of a kind long ago labelled by Madame Sand as "the *literature of mysteries of iniquity*, which men of talent and imagination try to bring into fashion." But the real *people* in France, the foundation of things there, both in George Sand's eyes and in reality, is the peasant. The peasant was the object of Madame Sand's fondest predilections in the present, and happiest hopes in the future. The

Revolution and its doctrine of equality had made the French peasant. What wonder, then, if she saluted the doctrine as a holy and paramount one?

And the French peasant is really, so far as I can see, the largest and strongest element of soundness which the body social of any European nation possesses. To him is due that astonishing recovery which France has made since her defeat, and which George Sand predicted in the very hour of ruin. Yes, in 1870 she predicted *ce réveil général qui va suivre, à la grande surprise des autres nations, l'espèce d'agonie où elles nous voient tombés*,[1] "the general re-arising which, to the astonishment of other nations, is about to follow the sort of agony in which they now see us lying." To the condition, character, and qualities of the French peasant this recovery is in the main due. His material well-being is known to all of us. M. de Laveleye,[2] the well-known economist, a Belgian and a Protestant, says that France, being the country of Europe where the soil is more divided than anywhere except in Switzerland and Norway, is at the same time the country where well-being is most widely spread, where wealth has of late years increased most, and where population is least outrunning the limits which, for the comfort and progress of the working classes themselves, seem necessary. George Sand could see, of course, the well-being of the French peasant, for we can all see it.

But there is more. George Sand was a woman, with a woman's ideal of gentleness, of "the charm of good manners," as essential to civilization. She has somewhere spoken admirably of the variety and balance of forces which go to make up true civilization; "certain forces of weakness, docility, attractiveness, suavity, are here just as real forces as forces of vigor, encroach-

ment, violence, or brutality." Yes, as real *forces*, although Prince Bismarck cannot see it; because human nature requires them, and, often as they may be baffled, and slow as may be the process of their asserting themselves, mankind is not satisfied with its own civilization, and keeps fidgeting at it and altering it again and again, until room is made for them. George Sand thought the French people, — meaning principally, again, by the French people the *people* properly so called, the peasant, — she thought it "the most kindly, the most amiable, of all peoples." Nothing is more touching than to read in her *Journal*, written in 1870, while she was witnessing what seemed to be "the agony of the Latin races," and undergoing what seemed to be the process of "dying in a general death of one's family, one's country, and one's nation," how constant is her defence of the people, the peasant, against her Republican friends. Her Republican friends were furious with the peasant; accused him of stolidity, cowardice, want of patriotism; accused him of having given them the Empire, with all its vileness; wanted to take away from him the suffrage. Again and again does George Sand take up his defence, and warn her friends of the folly and danger of their false estimate of him. "The contempt of the masses, there," she cries, "is the misfortune and crime of the present moment!"[1] "To execrate the people," she exclaims again, "is real blasphemy; the people is worth more than we are."

If the peasant gave us the Empire, says Madame Sand, it was because he saw the parties of liberals disputing, gesticulating, and threatening to tear one another asunder and France too; he was told *the Empire is peace*, and he accepted the Empire. The peasant was deceived, he is uninstructed, he moves

slowly; but he moves, he has admirable virtues, and in him, says George Sand, is our life: —

"Poor Jacques Bonhomme! accuse thee and despise thee who will; for my part I pity thee, and in spite of thy faults I shall always love thee. Never will I forget how, a child, I was carried asleep on thy shoulders, how I was given over to thy care and followed thee everywhere, to the field, the stall, the cottage. They are all dead, those good old people who have borne me in their arms; but I remember them well, and I appreciate at this hour, to the minutest detail, the pureness, the kindness, the patience, the good humor, the poetry, which presided over that rustic education amidst disasters of like kind with those which we are undergoing now. Why should I quarrel with the peasant because on certain points he feels and thinks differently from what I do? There are other essential points on which we may feel eternally at one with him, — probity and charity." [1]

Another generation of peasants had grown up since that first revolutionary generation of her youth, and equality, as its reign proceeded, had not deteriorated but improved them.

"They have advanced greatly in self-respect and well-being, these peasants from twenty years old to forty: they never ask for anything. When one meets them they no longer take off their hat. If they know you they come up to you and hold out their hand. All foreigners who stay with us are struck with their good bearing, with their amenity, and the simple, friendly, and polite ease of their behavior. In presence of people whom they esteem they are, like their fathers, models of tact and politeness; but they have more than that mere *sentiment* of equality which was all that their fathers had, — they have the *idea* of equality,

and the determination to maintain it. This step upwards they owe to their having the franchise. Those who would fain treat them as creatures of a lower order dare not now show this disposition to their face; it would not be pleasant."[1]

Mr. Hamerton's[2] interesting book about French life has much, I think, to confirm this account of the French peasant. What I have seen of France myself (and I have seen something) is fully in agreement with it. Of a civilization and an equality which makes the peasant thus *human*, gives to the bulk of the people well-being, probity, charity, self-respect, tact, and good manners, let us pardon Madame Sand if she feels and speaks enthusiastically. Some little variation on our own eternal trio of Barbarians, Philistines, Populace,[3] or on the eternal solo of Philistinism among our brethren of the United States and the Colonies, is surely permissible.

Where one is more inclined to differ from Madame Sand is in her estimate of her Republican friends of the educated classes. They may stand, she says, for the genius and the soul of France; they represent its "exalted imagination and profound sensibility," while the peasant represents its humble, sound, indispensable body. Her protégé, the peasant, is much ruder with those eloquent gentlemen, and has his own name for one and all of them, *l'avocat*, by which he means to convey his belief that words are more to be looked for from that quarter than seriousness and profit. It seems to me by no means certain but that the peasant is in the right.

George Sand herself has said admirable things of these friends of hers; of their want of patience, temper, wisdom; of their "vague and violent way of talking"; of their interminable flow of "stimulating

phrases, cold as death." Her own place is of course with the party and propaganda of organic change. But George Sand felt the poetry of the past; she had no hatreds; the furies, the follies, the self-deceptions of secularist and revolutionist fanatics filled her with dismay. They are, indeed, the great danger of France, and it is amongst the educated and articulate classes of France that they prevail. If the educated and articulate classes in France were as sound in their way as the inarticulate peasant is in his, France would present a different spectacle. Not "imagination and sensibility" are so much required from the educated classes of France, as simpler, more serious views of life; a knowledge how great a part *conduct* (if M. Challemel-Lacour[1] will allow me to say so) fills in it; a better example. The few who see this, such as Madame Sand among the dead, and M. Renan[2] among the living, perhaps awaken on that account, amongst quiet observers at a distance, all the more sympathy; but in France they are isolated.

All the later work of George Sand, however, all her hope of genuine social renovation, take the simple and serious ground so necessary. "The cure for us is far more simple than we will believe. All the better natures amongst us see it and feel it. It is a good direction given by ourselves to our hearts and consciences; — *une bonne direction donnée par nous-mêmes à nos cœurs et à nos consciences.*"[3] These are among the last words of her *Journal* of 1870.

Whether or not the number of George Sand's works — always fresh, always attractive, but poured out too lavishly and rapidly — is likely to prove a hindrance to her fame, I do not care to consider. Posterity, alarmed at the way in which its literary

baggage grows upon it, always seeks to leave behind it as much as it can, as much as it dares, — everything but masterpieces. But the immense vibration of George Sand's voice upon the ear of Europe will not soon die away. Her passions and her errors have been abundantly talked of. She left them behind her, and men's memory of her will leave them behind also. There will remain of her to mankind the sense of benefit and stimulus from the passage upon earth of that large and frank nature, of that large and pure utterance, — the *large utterance of the early gods*. There will remain an admiring and ever widening report of that great and ingenuous soul, simple, affectionate, without vanity, without pedantry, human, equitable, patient, kind. She believed herself, she said, "to be in sympathy, across time and space, with a multitude of honest wills which interrogate their conscience and try to put themselves in accord with it." This chain of sympathy will extend more and more.)

It is silent, that eloquent voice! it is sunk, that noble, that speaking head! we sum up, as we best can, what she said to us, and we bid her adieu. From many hearts in many lands a troop of tender and grateful regrets converge towards her humble churchyard in Berry. Let them be joined by these words of sad homage from one of a nation which she esteemed, and which knew her very little and very ill. Her guiding thought, the guiding thought which she did her best to make ours too, "the sentiment of the ideal life, which is none other than man's normal life as we shall one day know it," is in harmony with words and promises familiar to that sacred place where she lies. *Expectat resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi sæculi.*[1]

WORDSWORTH[1]

I REMEMBER hearing Lord Macaulay say, after Wordsworth's death, when subscriptions were being collected to found a memorial of him, that ten years earlier more money could have been raised in Cambridge alone, to do honor to Wordsworth, than was now raised all through the country. Lord Macaulay had, as we know, his own heightened and telling way of putting things, and we must always make allowance for it. But probably it is true that Wordsworth has never, either before or since, been so accepted and popular, so established in possession of the minds of all who profess to care for poetry, as he was between the years 1830 and 1840, and at Cambridge. From the very first, no doubt, he had his believers and witnesses. But I have myself heard him declare that, for he knew not how many years, his poetry had never brought him in enough to buy his shoe-strings. The poetry-reading public was very slow to recognize him, and was very easily drawn away from him. Scott effaced him with this public. Byron effaced him.

The death of Byron seemed, however, to make an opening for Wordsworth. Scott, who had for some time ceased to produce poetry himself, and stood before the public as a great novelist; Scott, too genuine himself not to feel the profound genuineness of Wordsworth, and with an instinctive recognition of his firm hold on nature and of his local truth, always admired him sincerely, and praised him generously. The influence of Coleridge upon young men of ability was then powerful, and was still gathering strength; this influence

told entirely in favor of Wordsworth's poetry. Cambridge was a place where Coleridge's influence had great action, and where Wordsworth's poetry, therefore, flourished especially. But even amongst the general public its sale grew large, the eminence of its author was widely recognized, and Rydal Mount[1] became an object of pilgrimage. I remember Wordsworth relating how one of the pilgrims, a clergyman, asked him if he had ever written anything besides the *Guide to the Lakes*. Yes, he answered modestly, he had written verses. Not every pilgrim was a reader, but the vogue was established, and the stream of pilgrims came.

Mr. Tennyson's decisive appearance dates from 1842.[2] One cannot say that he effaced Wordsworth as Scott and Byron had effaced him. The poetry of Wordsworth had been so long before the public, the suffrage of good judges was so steady and so strong in its favor, that by 1842 the verdict of posterity, one may almost say, had been already pronounced, and Wordsworth's English fame was secure. But the vogue, the ear and applause of the great body of poetry-readers, never quite thoroughly perhaps his, he gradually lost more and more, and Mr. Tennyson gained them. Mr. Tennyson drew to himself, and away from Wordsworth, the poetry-reading public, and the new generations. Even in 1850, when Wordsworth died, this diminution of popularity was visible, and occasioned the remark of Lord Macaulay which I quoted at starting.

The diminution has continued. The influence of Coleridge has waned, and Wordsworth's poetry can no longer draw succor from this ally. The poetry has not, however, wanted eulogists; and it may be said to have brought its eulogists luck, for almost every one who has praised Wordsworth's poetry has praised it well. But the public has remained cold, or, at least, undeter-

mined. Even the abundance of Mr. Palgrave's fine and skilfully chosen specimens of Wordsworth, in the *Golden Treasury*, surprised many readers, and gave offense to not a few. To tenth-rate critics and compilers, for whom any violent shock to the public taste would be a temerity not to be risked, it is still quite permissible to speak of Wordsworth's poetry, not only with ignorance, but with impertinence. On the Continent he is almost unknown.

I cannot think, then, that Wordsworth has, up to this time, at all obtained his deserts. "Glory," said M. Renan the other day, "glory after all is the thing which has the best chance of not being altogether vanity." Wordsworth was a homely man, and himself would certainly never have thought of talking of glory as that which, after all, has the best chance of not being altogether vanity. Yet we may well allow that few things are less vain than *real* glory. Let us conceive of the whole group of civilized nations as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working towards a common result; a confederation whose members have a due knowledge both of the past, out of which they all proceed, and of one another. This was the ideal of Goethe, and it is an ideal which will impose itself upon the thoughts of our modern societies more and more. Then to be recognized by the verdict of such a confederation as a master, or even as a seriously and eminently worthy workman, in one's own line of intellectual or spiritual activity, is indeed glory; a glory which it would be difficult to rate too highly. For what could be more beneficent, more salutary? The world is forwarded by having its attention fixed on the best things; and here is a tribunal, free from all suspicion of national and provincial partiality, put-

ting a stamp on the best things, and recommending them for general honor and acceptance. A nation, again, is furthered by recognition of its real gifts and successes; it is encouraged to develop them further. And here is an honest verdict, telling us which of our supposed successes are really, in the judgment of the great impartial world, and not in our private judgment only, successes, and which are not.

It is so easy to feel pride and satisfaction in one's own things, so hard to make sure that one is right in feeling it! We have a great empire. But so had Nebuchadnezzar. We extol the "unrivalled happiness" of our national civilization. But then comes a candid friend,[1] and remarks that our upper class is materialized, our middle class vulgarized, and our lower class brutalized. We are proud of our painting, our music. But we find that in the judgment of other people our painting is questionable, and our music non-existent. We are proud of our men of science. And here it turns out that the world is with us; we find that in the judgment of other people, too, Newton among the dead, and Mr. Darwin among the living, hold as high a place as they hold in our national opinion.

Finally, we are proud of our poets and poetry. Now poetry is nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth. It is no small thing, therefore, to succeed eminently in poetry. And so much is required for duly estimating success here, that about poetry it is perhaps hardest to arrive at a sure general verdict, and takes longest. Meanwhile, our own conviction of the superiority of our national poets is not decisive, is almost certain to be mingled, as we see constantly in English eulogy of Shakespeare, with much of provincial infatuation. And we know what was the opinion

current amongst our neighbors the French — people of taste, acuteness, and quick literary tact — not a hundred years ago, about our great poets. The old *Biographie Universelle*[1] notices the pretension of the English to a place for their poets among the chief poets of the world, and says that this is a pretension which to no one but an Englishman can ever seem admissible. And the scornful, disparaging things said by foreigners about Shakespeare and Milton, and about our national over-estimate of them, have been often quoted, and will be in every one's remembrance.

A great change has taken place, and Shakespeare is now generally recognized, even in France, as one of the greatest of poets. Yes, some anti-Gallican cynic will say, the French rank him with Corneille and with Victor Hugo! But let me have the pleasure of quoting a sentence about Shakespeare, which I met with by accident not long ago in the *Correspondant*, a French review which not a dozen English people, I suppose, look at. The writer is praising Shakespeare's prose. With Shakespeare, he says, "prose comes in whenever the subject, being more familiar, is unsuited to the majestic English iambic." And he goes on: "Shakespeare is the king of poetic rhythm and style, as well as the king of the realm of thought; along with his dazzling prose, Shakespeare has succeeded in giving us the most varied, the most harmonious verse which has ever sounded upon the human ear since the verse of the Greeks." M. Henry Cochin,[2] the writer of this sentence, deserves our gratitude for it; it would not be easy to praise Shakespeare, in a single sentence, more justly. And when a foreigner and a Frenchman writes thus of Shakespeare, and when Goethe says of Milton, in whom there was so much to repel Goethe rather than to attract him, that "nothing has been

ever done so entirely in the sense of the Greeks as *Samson Agonistes*," and that "Milton is in very truth a poet whom we must treat with all reverence," then we understand what constitutes a European recognition of poets and poetry as contradistinguished from a merely national recognition, and that in favor both of Milton and of Shakespeare the judgment of the high court of appeal has finally gone.

I come back to M. Renan's praise of glory, from which I started. Yes, real glory is a most serious thing, glory authenticated by the Amphictyonic Court[1] of final appeal, definite glory. And even for poets and poetry, long and difficult as may be the process of arriving at the right award, the right award comes at last, the definitive glory rests where it is deserved. Every establishment of such a real glory is good and wholesome for mankind at large, good and wholesome for the nation which produced the poet crowned with it. To the poet himself it can seldom do harm; for he, poor man, is in his grave, probably, long before his glory crowns him.

Wordsworth has been in his grave for some thirty years, and certainly his lovers and admirers cannot flatter themselves that this great and steady light of glory as yet shines over him. He is not fully recognized at home; he is not recognized at all abroad. Yet I firmly believe that the poetical performance of Wordsworth is, after that of Shakespeare and Milton, of which all the world now recognizes the worth, undoubtedly the most considerable in our language from the Elizabethan age to the present time. Chaucer is anterior; and on other grounds, too, he cannot well be brought into the comparison. But taking the roll of our chief poetical names, besides Shakespeare and Milton, from the age of Elizabeth downwards, and

going through it, — Spenser, Dryden, Pope, Gray, Goldsmith, Cowper, Burns, Coleridge, Scott, Campbell, Moore, Byron, Shelley, Keats (I mention those only who are dead), — I think it certain that Wordsworth's name deserves to stand, and will finally stand, above them all. Several of the poets named have gifts and excellences which Wordsworth has not. But taking the performance of each as a whole, I say that Wordsworth seems to me to have left a body of poetical work superior in power, in interest, in the qualities which give enduring freshness, to that which any one of the others has left.

But this is not enough to say. I think it certain, further, that if we take the chief poetical names of the Continent since the death of Molière, and, omitting Goethe, confront the remaining names with that of Wordsworth, the result is the same. Let us take Klopstock,[1] Lessing,[2] Schiller, Uhland,[3] Rückert,[4] and Heine[5] for Germany; Filicaja,[6] Alfieri,[7] Manzoni,[8] and Leopardi[9] for Italy; Racine,[10] Boileau,[11] Voltaire, André Chénier,[12] Béranger,[13] Lamartine,[14] Musset,[15] M. Victor Hugo (he has been so long celebrated that although he still lives I may be permitted to name him) for France. Several of these, again, have evidently gifts and excellences to which Wordsworth can make no pretension. But in real poetical achievement it seems to me indubitable that to Wordsworth, here again, belongs the palm. It seems to me that Wordsworth has left behind him a body of poetical work which wears, and will wear, better on the whole than the performance of any one of these personages, so far more brilliant and celebrated, most of them, than the homely poet of Rydal. Wordsworth's performance in poetry is on the whole, in power, in interest, in the qualities which give enduring freshness, superior to theirs.

This is a high claim to make for Wordsworth. But if it is a just claim, if Wordsworth's place among the poets who have appeared in the last two or three centuries is after Shakespeare, Molière, Milton, Goethe, indeed, but before all the rest, then in time Wordsworth will have his due. We shall recognize him in his place, as we recognize Shakespeare and Milton; and not only we ourselves shall recognize him, but he will be recognized by Europe also. Meanwhile, those who recognize him already may do well, perhaps, to ask themselves whether there are not in the case of Wordsworth certain special obstacles which hinder or delay his due recognition by others, and whether these obstacles are not in some measure removable.

The *Excursion* and the *Prelude*, his poems of greatest bulk, are by no means Wordsworth's best work. His best work is in his shorter pieces, and many indeed are there of these which are of first-rate excellence. But in his seven volumes the pieces of high merit are mingled with a mass of pieces very inferior to them; so inferior to them that it seems wonderful how the same poet should have produced both. Shakespeare frequently has lines and passages in a strain quite false, and which are entirely unworthy of him. But one can imagine him smiling if one could meet him in the Elysian Fields and tell him so; smiling and replying that he knew it perfectly well himself, and what did it matter? But with Wordsworth the case is different. Work altogether inferior, work quite uninspired, flat and dull, is produced by him with evident unconsciousness of its defects, and he presents it to us with the same faith and seriousness as his best work. Now a drama or an epic fill the mind, and one does not look beyond them; but in a collection of short pieces the impression made by one piece requires to

be continued and sustained by the piece following. In reading Wordsworth the impression made by one of his fine pieces is too often dulled and spoiled by a very inferior piece coming after it.

Wordsworth composed verses during a space of some sixty years; and it is no exaggeration to say that within one single decade of those years, between 1798 and 1808, almost all his really first-rate work was produced. A mass of inferior work remains, work done before and after this golden prime, imbedding the first-rate work and clogging it, obstructing our approach to it, chilling, not unfrequently, the high-wrought mood with which we leave it. To be recognized far and wide as a great poet, to be possible and receivable as a classic, Wordsworth needs to be relieved of a great deal of the poetical baggage which now encumbers him. To administer this relief is indispensable, unless he is to continue to be a poet for the few only, — a poet valued far below his real worth by the world.

There is another thing. Wordsworth classified his poems not according to any commonly received plan of arrangement, but according to a scheme of mental physiology. He has poems of the fancy, poems of the imagination, poems of sentiment and reflection, and so on. His categories are ingenious but far-fetched, and the result of his employment of them is unsatisfactory. Poems are separated one from another which possess a kinship of subject or of treatment far more vital and deep than the supposed unity of mental origin, which was Wordsworth's reason for joining them with others.

The tact of the Greeks in matters of this kind was infallible. We may rely upon it that we shall not improve upon the classification adopted by the Greeks for kinds of poetry; that their categories of epic, dramatic, lyric, and so forth, have a natural pro-

priety, and should be adhered to. It may sometimes seem doubtful to which of two categories a poem belongs; whether this or that poem is to be called, for instance, narrative or lyric, lyric or elegiac. But there is to be found in every good poem a strain, a predominant note, which determines the poem as belonging to one of these kinds rather than the other; and here is the best proof of the value of the classification, and of the advantage of adhering to it. Wordsworth's poems will never produce their due effect until they are freed from their present artificial arrangement, and grouped more naturally.

Disengaged from the quantity of inferior work which now obscures them, the best poems of Wordsworth, I hear many people say, would indeed stand out in great beauty, but they would prove to be very few in number, scarcely more than a half a dozen. I maintain, on the other hand, that what strikes me with admiration, what establishes in my opinion Wordsworth's superiority, is the great and ample body of powerful work which remains to him, even after all his inferior work has been cleared away. He gives us so much to rest upon, so much which communicates his spirit and engages ours!

This is of very great importance. If it were a comparison of single pieces, or of three or four pieces, by each poet, I do not say that Wordsworth would stand decisively above Gray, or Burns, or Coleridge, or Keats, or Manzoni, or Heine. It is in his ampler body of powerful work that I find his superiority. His good work itself, his work which counts, is not all of it, of course, of equal value. Some kinds of poetry are in themselves lower kinds than others. The ballad kind is a lower kind; the didactic kind, still more, is a lower kind. Poetry of this latter sort counts, too, sometimes, by

its biographical interest partly, not by its poetical interest pure and simple; but then this can only be when the poet producing it has the power and importance of Wordsworth, a power and importance which he assuredly did not establish by such didactic poetry alone. Altogether, it is, I say, by the great body of powerful and significant work which remains to him, after every reduction and deduction has been made, that Wordsworth's superiority is proved.

To exhibit this body of Wordsworth's best work, to clear away obstructions from around it, and to let it speak for itself, is what every lover of Wordsworth should desire. Until this has been done, Wordsworth, whom we, to whom he is dear, all of us know and feel to be so great a poet, has not had a fair chance before the world. When once it has been done, he will make his way best, not by our advocacy of him, but by his own worth and power. We may safely leave him to make his way thus, we who believe that a superior worth and power in poetry finds in mankind a sense responsive to it and disposed at last to recognize it. Yet at the outset, before he has been duly known and recognized, we may do Wordsworth a service, perhaps, by indicating in what his superior power and worth will be found to consist, and in what it will not.

Long ago, in speaking of Homer, I said that the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness. I said that a great poet receives his distinctive character of superiority from his application, under the conditions immutably fixed by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth, from his application, I say, to his subject, whatever it may be, of the ideas

> "On man, on nature, and on human life,"[1]

which he has acquired for himself. The line quoted is Wordsworth's own; and his superiority arises from his powerful use, in his best pieces, his powerful application to his subject, of ideas "on man, on nature, and on human life."

Voltaire, with his signal acuteness, most truly remarked that "no nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation." And he adds; "There, it seems to me, is the great merit of the English poets." Voltaire does not mean, by "treating in poetry moral ideas," the composing moral and didactic poems; — that brings us but a very little way in poetry. He means just the same thing as was meant when I spoke above "of the noble and profound application of ideas to life"; and he means the application of these ideas under the conditions fixed for us by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth. If it is said that to call these ideas *moral* ideas is to introduce a strong and injurious limitation, I answer that it is to do nothing of the kind, because moral ideas are really so main a part of human life. The question, *how to live*, is itself a moral idea; and it is the question which most interests every man, and with which, in some way or other, he is perpetually occupied. A large sense is of course to be given to the term *moral*. Whatever bears upon the question, "how to live," comes under it.

> "Nor love thy life, nor hate; but, what thou liv'st,
> Live well; how long or short, permit to heaven."[1]

In those fine lines Milton utters, as every one at once perceives, a moral idea. Yes, but so too, when Keats consoles the forward-bending lover on the Grecian Urn, the lover arrested and presented in immortal relief by the sculptor's hand before he can kiss, with the line,

"Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair —"

he utters a moral idea. When Shakespeare says, that

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep,"[1]

he utters a moral idea.

Voltaire was right in thinking that the energetic and profound treatment of moral ideas, in this large sense, is what distinguishes the English poetry. He sincerely meant praise, not dispraise or hint of limitation; and they err who suppose that poetic limitation is a necessary consequence of the fact, the fact being granted as Voltaire states it. If what distinguishes the greatest poets is their powerful and profound application of ideas to life, which surely no good critic will deny, then to prefix to the term ideas here the term moral makes hardly any difference, because human life itself is in so preponderating a degree moral.

It is important, therefore, to hold fast to this: that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life;[2] that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life, — to the question: How to live. Morals are often treated in a narrow and false fashion; they are bound up with systems of thought and belief which have had their day; they are fallen into the hands of pedants and professional dealers; they grow tiresome to some of us. We find attraction, at times, even in a poetry of revolt against them; in a poetry which might take for its motto Omar Khayyám's words: "Let us make up in the tavern for the time which we have wasted in the mosque." Or we find attractions in a poetry indifferent to them; in a poetry where the contents may be what they will, but where the form is studied and exquisite. We delude

ourselves in either case; and the best cure for our delusion is to let our minds rest upon that great and inexhaustible word *life*, until we learn to enter into its meaning. A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against *life;* a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards *life*.

Epictetus had a happy figure for things like the play of the senses, or literary form and finish, or argumentative ingenuity, in comparison with "the best and master thing" for us, as he called it, the concern, how to live. Some people were afraid of them, he said, or they disliked and undervalued them. Such people were wrong; they were unthankful or cowardly. But the things might also be over-prized, and treated as final when they are not. They bear to life the relation which inns bear to home. "As if a man, journeying home, and finding a nice inn on the road, and liking it, were to stay forever at the inn! Man, thou hast forgotten thine object; thy journey was not *to* this, but *through* this. 'But this inn is taking.' And how many other inns, too, are taking, and how many fields and meadows! but as places of passage merely. You have an object, which is this: to get home, to do your duty to your family, friends, and fellow-countrymen, to attain inward freedom, serenity, happiness, contentment. Style takes your fancy, arguing takes your fancy, and you forget your home and want to make your abode with them and to stay with them, on the plea that they are taking. Who denies that they are taking? but as places of passage, as inns. And when I say this, you suppose me to be attacking the care for style, the care for argument. I am not; I attack the resting in them, the not looking to the end which is beyond them."[1]

Now, when we come across a poet like Théophile Gau-

tier,[1] we have a poet who has taken up his abode at an inn, and never got farther. There may be inducements to this or that one of us, at this or that moment, to find delight in him, to cleave to him; but after all, we do not change the truth about him, — we only stay ourselves in his inn along with him. And when we come across a poet like Wordsworth, who sings

> "Of truth, of grandeur, beauty, love and hope,
> And melancholy fear subdued by faith,
> Of blessed consolations in distress,
> Of moral strength and intellectual power,
> Of joy in widest commonalty spread — "[2]

then we have a poet intent on "the best and master thing," and who prosecutes his journey home. We say, for brevity's sake, that he deals with *life*, because he deals with that in which life really consists. This is what Voltaire means to praise in the English poets, — this dealing with what is really life. But always it is the mark of the greatest poets that they deal with it; and to say that the English poets are remarkable for dealing with it, is only another way of saying, what is true, that in poetry the English genius has especially shown its power.

Wordsworth deals with it, and his greatness lies in his dealing with it so powerfully. I have named a number of celebrated poets above all of whom he, in my opinion, deserves to be placed. He is to be placed above poets like Voltaire, Dryden, Pope, Lessing, Schiller, because these famous personages, with a thousand gifts and merits, never, or scarcely ever, attain the distinctive accent and utterance of the high and genuine poets —

> "Quique pii vates et Phœbo digna locuti,"[3]

at all. Burns, Keats, Heine, not to speak of others in our list, have this accent; — who can doubt it? And

at the same time they have treasures of humor, felicity, passion, for which in Wordsworth we shall look in vain. Where, then, is Wordsworth's superiority? It is here; he deals with more of *life* than they do; he deals with *life*, as a whole, more powerfully.

No Wordsworthian will doubt this. Nay, the fervent Wordsworthian will add, as Mr. Leslie Stephen[1] does, that Wordsworth's poetry is precious because his philosophy is sound; that his "ethical system is as distinctive and capable of exposition as Bishop Butler's"; that his poetry is informed by ideas which "fall spontaneously into a scientific system of thought." But we must be on our guard against the Wordsworthians, if we want to secure for Wordsworth his due rank as a poet. The Wordsworthians are apt to praise him for the wrong things, and to lay far too much stress upon what they call his philosophy. His poetry is the reality, his philosophy — so far, at least, as it may put on the form and habit of "a scientific system of thought," and the more that it puts them on — is the illusion. Perhaps we shall one day learn to make this proposition general, and to say: Poetry is the reality, philosophy the illusion. But in Wordsworth's case, at any rate, we cannot do him justice until we dismiss his formal philosophy.

The *Excursion* abounds with philosophy and therefore the *Excursion* is to the Wordsworthian what it never can be to the disinterested lover of poetry, — a satisfactory work. "Duty exists," says Wordsworth, in the *Excursion;* and then he proceeds thus —

> ". . . Immutably survive,
> For our support, the measures and the forms,
> Which an abstract Intelligence supplies,
> Whose kingdom is, where time and space are not."[2]

And the Wordsworthian is delighted, and thinks that

here is a sweet union of philosophy and poetry. But the disinterested lover of poetry will feel that the lines carry us really not a step farther than the proposition which they would interpret; that they are a tissue of elevated but abstract verbiage, alien to the very nature of poetry.

Or let us come direct to the centre of Wordsworth's philosophy, as "an ethical system, as distinctive and capable of systematical exposition as Bishop Butler's" —

> ". . . One adequate support
> For the calamities of mortal life
> Exists, one only; — an assured belief
> That the procession of our fate, howe'er
> Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
> Of infinite benevolence and power;
> Whose everlasting purposes embrace
> All accidents, converting them to good."[1]

That is doctrine such as we hear in church too, religious and philosophic doctrine; and the attached Wordsworthian loves passages of such doctrine, and brings them forward in proof of his poet's excellence. But however true the doctrine may be, it has, as here presented, none of the characters of *poetic* truth, the kind of truth which we require from a poet, and in which Wordsworth is really strong.

Even the "intimations" of the famous Ode,[2] those corner-stones of the supposed philosophic system of Wordsworth, — the idea of the high instincts and affections coming out in childhood, testifying of a divine home recently left, and fading away as our life proceeds, — this idea, of undeniable beauty as a play of fancy, has itself not the character of poetic truth of the best kind; it has no real solidity. The instinct of delight in Nature and her beauty had no doubt extraordinary strength in Wordsworth himself as a child.

But to say that universally this instinct is mighty in childhood, and tends to die away afterwards, is to say what is extremely doubtful. In many people, perhaps with the majority of educated persons, the love of nature is nearly imperceptible at ten years old, but strong and operative at thirty. In general we may say of these high instincts of early childhood, the base of the alleged systematic philosophy of Wordsworth, what Thucydides says of the early achievements of the Greek race: "It is impossible to speak with certainty of what is so remote; but from all that we can really investigate, I should say that they were no very great things."

Finally, the "scientific system of thought" in Wordsworth gives us at least such poetry as this, which the devout Wordsworthian accepts —

> "O for the coming of that glorious time
> When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
> And best protection, this Imperial Realm,
> While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
> An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
> Them who are born to serve her and obey;
> Binding herself by statute to secure,
> For all the children whom her soil maintains,
> The rudiments of letters, and inform
> The mind with moral and religious truth." [1]

Wordsworth calls Voltaire dull, and surely the production of these un-Voltairian lines must have been imposed on him as a judgment! One can hear them being quoted at a Social Science Congress; one can call up the whole scene. A great room in one of our dismal provincial towns; dusty air and jaded afternoon daylight; benches full of men with bald heads and women in spectacles; an orator lifting up his face from a manuscript written within and without to declaim these lines of Wordsworth; and in the soul

of any poor child of nature who may have wandered in thither, an unutterable sense of lamentation, and mourning, and woe!

"But turn we," as Wordsworth says, "from these bold, bad men," the haunters of Social Science Congresses. And let us be on our guard, too, against the exhibitors and extollers of a "scientific system of thought" in Wordsworth's poetry. The poetry will never be seen aright while they thus exhibit it. The cause of its greatness is simple, and may be told quite simply. Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it.

The source of joy from which he thus draws is the truest and most unfailing source of joy accessible to man. It is also accessible universally. Wordsworth brings us word, therefore, according to his own strong and characteristic line, he brings us word

"Of joy in widest commonalty spread."[1]

Here is an immense advantage for a poet. Wordsworth tells of what all seek, and tells of it at its truest and best source, and yet a source where all may go and draw for it.

Nevertheless, we are not to suppose that everything is precious which Wordsworth, standing even at this perennial and beautiful source, may give us. Wordsworthians are apt to talk as if it must be. They will speak with the same reverence of *The Sailor's Mother*, for example, as of *Lucy Gray*. They do their master harm by such lack of discrimination. *Lucy Gray* is

a beautiful success; *The Sailor's Mother* is a failure. To give aright what he wishes to give, to interpret and render successfully, is not always within Wordsworth's own command. It is within no poet's command; here is the part of the Muse, the inspiration, the God, the "not ourselves."[1] In Wordsworth's case, the accident, for so it may almost be called, of inspiration, is of peculiar importance. No poet, perhaps, is so evidently filled with a new and sacred energy when the inspiration is upon him; no poet, when it fails him, is so left "weak as is a breaking wave." I remember hearing him say that "Goethe's poetry was not inevitable enough." The remark is striking and true; no line in Goethe, as Goethe said himself, but its maker knew well how it came there. Wordsworth is right, Goethe's poetry is not inevitable; not inevitable enough. But Wordsworth's poetry, when he is at his best, is inevitable, as inevitable as Nature herself. It might seem that Nature not only gave him the matter for his poem, but wrote his poem for him. He has no style. He was too conversant with Milton not to catch at times his master's manner, and he has fine Miltonic lines; but he has no assured poetic style of his own, like Milton. When he seeks to have a style he falls into ponderosity and pomposity. In the *Excursion* we have his style, as an artistic product of his own creation; and although Jeffrey completely failed to recognize Wordsworth's real greatness, he was yet not wrong in saying of the *Excursion*, as a work of poetic style: "This will never do."[2] And yet magical as is that power, which Wordsworth has not, of assured and possessed poetic style, he has something which is an equivalent for it.

Every one who has any sense for these things feels the subtle turn, the heightening, which is given to a

poet's verse by his genius for style. We can feel it in the

> "After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well" —[1]

of Shakespeare; in the

> ". . . though fall'n on evil days,
> On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues" —[2]

of Milton. It is the incomparable charm of Milton's power of poetic style which gives such worth to *Paradise Regained*, and makes a great poem of a work in which Milton's imagination does not soar high. Wordsworth has in constant possession, and at command, no style of this kind; but he had too poetic a nature, and had read the great poets too well, not to catch, as I have already remarked, something of it occasionally. We find it not only in his Miltonic lines; we find it in such a phrase as this, where the manner is his own, not Milton's —

> "the fierce confederate storm
> Of sorrow barricadoed evermore
> Within the walls of cities;"[3]

although even here, perhaps, the power of style which is undeniable, is more properly that of eloquent prose than the subtle heightening and change wrought by genuine poetic style. It is style, again, and the elevation given by style, which chiefly makes the effectiveness of *Laodameia*. Still the right sort of verse to choose from Wordsworth, if we are to seize his true and most characteristic form of expression, is a line like this from *Michael* —

> "And never lifted up a single stone."

There is nothing subtle in it, no heightening, no study of poetic style, strictly so called, at all; yet it is expression of the highest and most truly expressive kind.

Wordsworth owed much to Burns, and a style of perfect plainness, relying for effect solely on the weight and force of that which with entire fidelity it utters, Burns could show him.

> "The poor inhabitant below
> Was quick to learn and wise to know,
> And keenly felt the friendly glow
> And softer flame;
> But thoughtless follies laid him low
> And stain'd his name."[1]

Every one will be conscious of a likeness here to Wordsworth; and if Wordsworth did great things with this nobly plain manner, we must remember, what indeed he himself would always have been forward to acknowledge, that Burns used it before him.

Still Wordsworth's use of it has something unique and unmatchable. Nature herself seems, I say, to take the pen out of his hand, and to write for him with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power. This arises from two causes; from the profound sincereness with which Wordsworth feels his subject, and also from the profoundly sincere and natural character of his subject itself. He can and will treat such a subject with nothing but the most plain, first-hand, almost austere naturalness. His expression may often be called bald, as, for instance, in the poem of *Resolution and Independence;* but it is bald as the bare mountain tops are bald, with a baldness which is full of grandeur.

Wherever we meet with the successful balance, in Wordsworth, of profound truth of subject with profound truth of execution, he is unique. His best poems are those which most perfectly exhibit this balance. I have a warm admiration for *Laodameia* and for the great *Ode;* but if I am to tell the very truth, I find *Laodameia* not wholly free from something artificial,

and the great *Ode* not wholly free from something declamatory. If I had to pick out poems of a kind most perfectly to show Wordsworth's unique power, I should rather choose poems such as *Michael*, *The Fountain*, *The Highland Reaper*.[1] And poems with the peculiar and unique beauty which distinguishes these, Wordsworth produced in considerable number; besides very many other poems of which the worth, although not so rare as the worth of these, is still exceedingly high.

On the whole, then, as I said at the beginning, not only is Wordsworth eminent by reason of the goodness of his best work, but he is eminent also by reason of the great body of good work which he has left to us. With the ancients I will not compare him. In many respects the ancients are far above us, and yet there is something that we demand which they can never give. Leaving the ancients, let us come to the poets and poetry of Christendom. Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, Milton, Goethe, are altogether larger and more splendid luminaries in the poetical heaven than Wordsworth. But I know not where else, among the moderns, we are to find his superiors.

To disengage the poems which show his power, and to present them to the English-speaking public and to the world, is the object of this volume. I by no means say that it contains all which in Wordsworth's poems is interesting. Except in the case of *Margaret*, a story composed separately from the rest of the *Excursion*, and which belongs to a different part of England, I have not ventured on detaching portions of poems, or on giving any piece otherwise than as Wordsworth himself gave it. But under the conditions imposed by this reserve, the volume contains, I think, everything, or nearly everything, which may best serve him with

the majority of lovers of poetry, nothing which may disserve him.

I have spoken lightly of Wordsworthians; and if we are to get Wordsworth recognized by the public and by the world, we must recommend him not in the spirit of a clique, but in the spirit of disinterested lovers of poetry. But I am a Wordsworthian myself. I can read with pleasure and edification *Peter Bell*, and the whole series of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, and the address to Mr. Wilkinson's spade, and even the *Thanksgiving Ode;* — everything of Wordsworth, I think, except *Vaudracour and Julia*. It is not for nothing that one has been brought up in the veneration of a man so truly worthy of homage; that one has seen him and heard him, lived in his neighborhood, and been familiar with his country. No Wordsworthian has a tenderer affection for this pure and sage master than I, or is less really offended by his defects. But Wordsworth is something more than the pure and sage master of a small band of devoted followers, and we ought not to rest satisfied until he is seen to be what he is. He is one of the very chief glories of English Poetry; and by nothing is England so glorious as by her poetry. Let us lay aside every weight which hinders our getting him recognized as this, and let our one study be to bring to pass, as widely as possible and as truly as possible, his own word concerning his poems: "They will coöperate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, and will, in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier."

His appeal was universal — great body of good work that he left

III. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STUDIES

SWEETNESS AND LIGHT[1]

THE disparagers of culture make its motive curiosity; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity; it is valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man would call this *culture*, or attach any value to it, as culture, at all. To find the real ground for the very differing estimate which serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture in the terms of which may lie a real ambiguity; and such a motive the word *curiosity* gives us.

I have before now pointed out that we English do not, like the foreigners, use this word in a good sense as well as in a bad sense. With us the word is always used in a somewhat disapproving sense. A liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity. In the *Quarterly Review*, some little time ago, was an estimate of the celebrated French critic, M. Sainte-Beuve,[2] and a very inadequate estimate it in my judgment was. And its inadequacy consisted chiefly in this: that in our English way it left out of sight the double sense really

involved in the word *curiosity*, thinking enough was said to stamp M. Sainte-Beuve with blame if it was said that he was impelled in his operations as a critic by curiosity, and omitting either to perceive that M. Sainte-Beuve himself, and many other people with him, would consider that this was praiseworthy and not blameworthy, or to point out why it ought really to be accounted worthy of blame and not of praise. For as there is a curiosity about intellectual matters which is futile, and merely a disease, so there is certainly a curiosity, — a desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are, — which is, in an intelligent being, natural and laudable. Nay, and the very desire to see things as they are, implies a balance and regulation of mind which is not often attained without fruitful effort, and which is the very opposite of the blind and diseased impulse of mind which is what we mean to blame when we blame curiosity. Montesquieu says: "The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature, and to render an intelligent being yet more intelligent."[1] This is the true ground to assign for the genuine scientific passion, however manifested, and for culture, viewed simply as a fruit of this passion; and it is a worthy ground, even though we let the term *curiosity* stand to describe it.

But there is of culture another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbor, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to

leave the world better and happier than we found it, — motives eminently such as are called social,— come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and preëminent part. Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is *a study of perfection*. It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. As, in the first view of it, we took for its worthy motto Montesquieu's words: "To render an intelligent being yet more intelligent!" so, in the second view of it, there is no better motto which it can have than these words of Bishop Wilson:[1] "To make reason and the will of God prevail!"[2]

Only, whereas the passion for doing good is apt to be overhasty in determining what reason and the will of God say, because its turn is for acting rather than thinking and it wants to be beginning to act; and whereas it is apt to take its own conceptions, which proceed from its own state of development and share in all the imperfections and immaturities of this, for a basis of action; what distinguishes culture is, that it is possessed by the scientific passion as well as by the passion of doing good; that it demands worthy notions of reason and the will of God, and does not readily suffer its own crude conceptions to substitute themselves for them. And knowing that no action or institution can be salutary and stable which is not based on reason and the will of God, it is not so bent on acting and instituting, even with the great aim of diminishing human error and misery ever before its thoughts, but that it can remember that acting and instituting are of little use, unless we know how and what we ought to act and to institute.

This culture is more interesting and more far-reaching than that other, which is founded solely on the scientific passion for knowing. But it needs times of faith and ardor, times when the intellectual horizon is opening and widening all around us, to flourish in. And is not the close and bounded intellectual horizon within which we have long lived and moved now lifting up, and are not new lights finding free passage to shine in upon us? For a long time there was no passage for them to make their way in upon us, and then it was of no use to think of adapting the world's action to them. Where was the hope of making reason and the will of God prevail among people who had a routine which they had christened reason and the will of God, in which they were inextricably bound, and beyond which they had no power of looking? But now the iron force of adhesion to the old routine, — social, political, religious, — has wonderfully yielded; the iron force of exclusion of all which is new has wonderfully yielded. The danger now is, not that people should obstinately refuse to allow anything but their old routine to pass for reason and the will of God, but either that they should allow some novelty or other to pass for these too easily, or else that they should underrate the importance of them altogether, and think it enough to follow action for its own sake, without troubling themselves to make reason and the will of God prevail therein. Now, then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail, believes in perfection, is the study and pursuit of perfection, and is no longer debarred, by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting acceptance for its ideas, simply because they are new.

The moment this view of culture is seized, the

moment it is regarded not solely as the endeavor to see things as they are, to draw towards a knowledge of the universal order which seems to be intended and aimed at in the world, and which it is a man's happiness to go along with or his misery to go counter to, — to learn, in short, the will of God, — the moment, I say, culture is considered not merely as the endeavor to *see* and *learn* this, but as the endeavor, also, to make it *prevail*, the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest. The mere endeavor to see and learn the truth for our own personal satisfaction is indeed a commencement for making it prevail, a preparing the way for this, which always serves this, and is wrongly, therefore, stamped with blame absolutely in itself and not only in its caricature and degeneration. But perhaps it has got stamped with blame, and disparaged with the dubious title of curiosity, because in comparison with this wider endeavor of such great and plain utility it looks selfish, petty, and unprofitable.

And religion, the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself, — religion, that voice of the deepest human experience, — does not only enjoin and sanction the aim which is the great aim of culture, the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail; but also, in determining generally in what human perfection consists, religion comes to a conclusion identical with that which culture, — culture seeking the determination of this question through *all* the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, of art, science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as of religion, in order to give a greater fulness and certainty to its solution, — likewise reaches. Religion says: *The kingdom of God*

is within you; and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an *internal* condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality. It places it in the ever-increasing efficacy and in the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling, which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature. As I have said on a former occasion: "It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture." Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here, too, it coincides with religion.

And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a *general* expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward. And, here, once more, culture lays on us the same obligation as religion, which says, as Bishop Wilson has admirably put it, that "to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness."[1]

But, finally, perfection, — as culture from a thorough

disinterested study of human nature and human experience learns to conceive it, — is a harmonious expansion of *all* the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. Here culture goes beyond religion as religion is generally conceived by us.

If culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances, — it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr. Bright,[1] and Mr. Frederic Harrison,[2] and many other Liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilization is, to a much greater degree than the civilization of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilization tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. Indeed nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which thwarts them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an *inward* condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilization in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us. The idea of perfection as a *general* expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, our hatred of all limits to the unrestrained

swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of "every man for himself." Above all, the idea of perfection as a *harmonious* expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, with our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country. Its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere. And, meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, ought to be made quite clear for every one to see, who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but machinery? what are railroads but machinery? what is wealth but machinery? what are, even, religious organizations but machinery? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them. I have before now noticed Mr. Roebuck's [1] stock argument for proving the greatness and happiness of England as she is, and for quite stopping the mouths of all gainsayers. Mr. Roebuck is never weary of reiterating this argu-

ment of his, so I do not know why I should be weary of noticing it. "May not every man in England say what he likes?" — Mr. Roebuck perpetually asks; and that, he thinks, is quite sufficient, and when every man may say what he likes, our aspirations ought to be satisfied. But the aspirations of culture, which is the study of perfection, are not satisfied, unless what men say, when they may say what they like, is worth saying, — has good in it, and more good than bad. In the same way the *Times*, replying to some foreign strictures on the dress, looks, and behavior of the English abroad, urges that the English ideal is that every one should be free to do and to look just as he likes. But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like, the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that.

And in the same way with respect to railroads and coal. Every one must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failure of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an end of the greatness of England. But what *is* greatness? — culture makes us ask. Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest, and admiration. If England were swallowed up by the sea to-morrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind, — would most, therefore, show the evidences of having possessed greatness, — the England of the last twenty years, or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spir-

itual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal, were very little developed? Well, then, what an unsound habit of mind it must be which makes us talk of things like coal or iron as constituting the greatness of England, and how salutary a friend is culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and thus dissipating delusions of this kind and fixing standards of perfection that are real!

Wealth, again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantage are directed, — the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself: and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe anything more firmly than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich. Now, the use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so. If it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines. The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich, are just the very people whom we call Philistines. Culture says: "Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture

of their minds; would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?" And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction which is of the highest possible value in stemming the common tide of men's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future, as one may hope, from being vulgarized, even if it cannot save the present.

Population, again, and bodily health and vigor, are things which are nowhere treated in such an unintelligent, misleading, exaggerated way as in England. Both are really machinery; yet how many people all around us do we see rest in them and fail to look beyond them! Why, one has heard people, fresh from reading certain articles of the *Times* on the Registrar-General's returns of marriages and births in this country, who would talk of our large English families in quite a solemn strain, as if they had something in itself beautiful, elevating, and meritorious in them; as if the British Philistine would have only to present himself before the Great Judge with his twelve children, in order to be received among the sheep as a matter of right!

But bodily health and vigor, it may be said, are not to be classed with wealth and population as mere machinery; they have a more real and essential value. True; but only as they are more intimately connected with a perfect spiritual condition than wealth or population are. The moment we disjoin them from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition, and pursue them, as we do pursue them, for their own sake and as ends in themselves, our worship of them becomes as mere worship of machinery, as our worship of wealth or population, and as unintelligent and vulgarizing a worship as that is. Every one with anything like an adequate idea of

human perfection has distinctly marked this subordination to higher and spiritual ends of the cultivation of bodily vigor and activity. "Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things," [1] says the author of the Epistle to Timothy. And the utilitarian Franklin says just as explicitly: — "Eat and drink such an exact quantity as suits the constitution of thy body, *in reference to the services of the mind*." [2] But the point of view of culture, keeping the mark of human perfection simply and broadly in view, and not assigning to this perfection, as religion or utilitarianism assigns to it, a special and limited character, this point of view, I say, of culture is best given by these words of Epictetus: "It is a sign of *ἀφυΐα*," says he, — that is, of a nature not finely tempered, — "to give yourselves up to things which relate to the body; to make, for instance, a great fuss about exercise, a great fuss about eating, a great fuss about drinking, a great fuss about walking, a great fuss about riding. All these things ought to be done merely by the way: the formation of the spirit and character must be our real concern." [3] This is admirable; and, indeed, the Greek word *εὐφυΐα*, a finely tempered nature, gives exactly the notion of perfection as culture brings us to conceive it: a harmonious perfection, a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, which unites "the two noblest of things," — as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his *Battle of the Books*, — "the two noblest of things, *sweetness and light*." [4] The *εὐφυής* is the man who tends towards sweetness and light; the *ἀφυής*, on the other hand, is our Philistine. The immense spiritual significance of the Greeks is due to their having been inspired with this central and happy idea of the essen-

tial character of human perfection; and Mr. Bright's misconception of culture, as a smattering of Greek and Latin, comes itself, after all, from this wonderful significance of the Greeks having affected the very machinery of our education, and is in itself a kind of homage to it.

In thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry. Far more than on our freedom, our population, and our industrialism, many amongst us rely upon our religious organizations to save us. I have called religion a yet more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea, though it has not yet had the success that the idea of conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature perfect on the moral side, — which is the dominant idea of religion, — has been enabled to have; and it is destined, adding to itself the religious idea of a devout energy, to transform and govern the other.

The best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was, — as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed, having regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own, — a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed than it had yet

been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, so present and paramount. It is impossible to have this idea too present and paramount; only, the moral fibre must be braced too. And we, because we have braced the moral fibre, are not on that account in the right way, if at the same time the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, is wanting or misapprehended amongst us; and evidently it *is* wanting or misapprehended at present. And when we rely as we do on our religious organizations, which in themselves do not and cannot give us this idea, and think we have done enough if we make them spread and prevail, then, I say, we fall into our common fault of overvaluing machinery.

Nothing is more common than for people to confound the inward peace and satisfaction which follows the subduing of the obvious faults of our animality with what I may call absolute inward peace and satisfaction, — the peace and satisfaction which are reached as we draw near to complete spiritual perfection, and not merely to moral perfection, or rather to relative moral perfection. No people in the world have done more and struggled more to attain this relative moral perfection than our English race has. For no people in the world has the command to *resist the devil*, to *overcome the wicked one*, in the nearest and most obvious sense of those words, had such a pressing force and reality. And we have had our reward, not only in the great worldly prosperity which our obedience to this command has brought us, but also, and far more, in great inward peace and satisfaction. But to me few things are more pathetic than to see people, on the strength of the inward peace and satisfaction which their rudimentary efforts towards perfection have

brought them, employ, concerning their incomplete perfection and the religious organizations within which they have found it, language which properly applies only to complete perfection, and is a far-off echo of the human soul's prophecy of it. Religion itself, I need hardly say, supplies them in abundance with this grand language. And very freely do they use it; yet it is really the severest possible criticism of such an incomplete perfection as alone we have yet reached through our religious organizations.

The impulse of the English race towards moral development and self-conquest has nowhere so powerfully manifested itself as in Puritanism. Nowhere has Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organization of the Independents.[1] The modern Independents have a newspaper, the *Nonconformist*, written with great sincerity and ability. The motto, the standard, the profession of faith which this organ of theirs carries aloft, is: "The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion."[2] There is sweetness and light, and an ideal of complete harmonious human perfection! One need not go to culture and poetry to find language to judge it. Religion, with its instinct for perfection, supplies language to judge it, language, too, which is in our mouths every day. "Finally, be of one mind, united in feeling,"[3] says St. Peter. There is an ideal which judges the Puritan ideal: "The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion!" And religious organizations like this are what people believe in, rest in, would give their lives for! Such, I say, is the wonderful virtue of even the beginnings of perfection, of having conquered even the plain faults of our animality, that the religious organization which has helped us to do it can seem to us

something precious, salutary, and to be propagated, even when it wears such a brand of imperfection on its forehead as this. And men have got such a habit of giving to the language of religion a special application, of making it a mere jargon, that for the condemnation which religion itself passes on the shortcomings of their religious organizations they have no ear; they are sure to cheat themselves and to explain this condemnation away. They can only be reached by the criticism which culture, like poetry, speaking a language not to be sophisticated, and resolutely testing these organizations by the ideal of a human perfection complete on all sides, applies to them.

But men of culture and poetry, it will be said, are again and again failing, and failing conspicuously, in the necessary first stage to a harmonious perfection, in the subduing of the great obvious faults of our animality, which it is the glory of these religious organizations to have helped us to subdue. True, they do often so fail. They have often been without the virtues as well as the faults of the Puritan; it has been one of their dangers that they so felt the Puritan's faults that they too much neglected the practice of his virtues. I will not, however, exculpate them at the Puritan's expense. They have often failed in morality, and morality is indispensable. And they have been punished for their failure, as the Puritan has been rewarded for his performance. They have been punished wherein they erred; but their ideal of beauty, of sweetness and light, and a human nature complete on all its sides, remains the true ideal of perfection still; just as the Puritan's ideal of perfection remains narrow and inadequate, although for what he did well he has been richly rewarded. Notwithstanding the mighty results of the Pilgrim Fathers' voyage, they and their standard

of perfection are rightly judged when we figure to ourselves Shakespeare or Virgil, — souls in whom sweetness and light, and all that in human nature is most humane, were eminent, — accompanying them on their voyage, and think what intolerable company Shakespeare and Virgil would have found them! In the same way let us judge the religious organizations which we see all around us. Do not let us deny the good and the happiness which they have accomplished; but do not let us fail to see clearly that their idea of human perfection is narrow and inadequate, and that the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion will never bring humanity to its true goal. As I said with regard to wealth: Let us look at the life of those who live in and for it, — so I say with regard to the religious organizations. Look at the life imaged in such a newspaper as the *Nonconformist*, — a life of jealousy of the Establishment, disputes, tea-meetings, openings of chapels, sermons; and then think of it as an ideal of a human life completing itself on all sides, and aspiring with all its organs after sweetness, light, and perfection!

Another newspaper, representing, like the *Nonconformist*, one of the religious organizations of this country, was a short time ago giving an account of the crowd at Epsom [1] on the Derby day, and of all the vice and hideousness which was to be seen in that crowd; and then the writer turned suddenly round upon Professor Huxley, and asked him how he proposed to cure all this vice and hideousness without religion. I confess I felt disposed to ask the asker this question: and how do you propose to cure it with such a religion as yours? How is the ideal of a life so unlovely, so unattractive, so incomplete, so narrow, so far removed from a true and satisfying ideal

of human perfection, as is the life of your religious organization as you yourself reflect it, to conquer and transform all this vice and hideousness? Indeed, the strongest plea for the study of perfection as pursued by culture, the clearest proof of the actual inadequacy of the idea of perfection held by the religious organizations, — expressing, as I have said, the most widespread effort which the human race has yet made after perfection, — is to be found in the state of our life and society with these in possession of it, and having been in possession of it I know not how many hundred years. We are all of us included in some religious organization or other; we all call ourselves, in the sublime and aspiring language of religion which I have before noticed, *children of God*. Children of God; — it is an immense pretension! — and how are we to justify it? By the works which we do, and the words which we speak. And the work which we collective children of God do, our grand centre of life, our *city* which we have builded for us to dwell in, is London! London, with its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of *publice egestas, privatim opulentia*,[1] — to use the words which Sallust puts into Cato's mouth about Rome, — unequalled in the world! The word, again, which we children of God speak, the voice which most hits our collective thought, the newspaper with the largest circulation in England, nay, with the largest circulation in the whole world, is the *Daily Telegraph!*[2] I say that when our religious organizations — which I admit to express the most considerable effort after perfection that our race has yet made — land us in no better result than this, it is high time to examine carefully their idea of perfection, to see whether it does not leave out of account sides and forces of human nature which we might turn

to great use ; whether it would not be more operative if it were more complete. And I say that the English reliance on our religious organizations and on their ideas of human perfection just as they stand, is like our reliance on freedom, on muscular Christianity, on population, on coal, on wealth, — mere belief in machinery, and unfruitful ; and that it is wholesomely counteracted by culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and on drawing the human race onwards to a more complete, a harmonious perfection.

Culture, however, shows its single-minded love of perfection, its desire simply to make reason and the will of God prevail, its freedom from fanaticism, by its attitude towards all this machinery, even while it insists that it *is* machinery. Fanatics, seeing the mischief men do themselves by their blind belief in some machinery or other, — whether it is wealth and industrialism, or whether it is the cultivation of bodily strength and activity, or whether it is a political organization, — or whether it is a religious organization, — oppose with might and main the tendency to this or that political and religious organization, or to games and athletic exercises, or to wealth and industrialism, and try violently to stop it. But the flexibility which sweetness and light give, and which is one of the rewards of culture pursued in good faith, enables a man to see that a tendency may be necessary, and even, as a preparation for something in the future, salutary, and yet that the generations or individuals who obey this tendency are sacrificed to it, that they fall short of the hope of perfection by following it ; and that its mischiefs are to be criticized, lest it should take too firm a hold and last after it has served its purpose.

Mr. Gladstone well pointed out, in a speech at Paris, — and others have pointed out the same thing,

— how necessary is the present great movement towards wealth and industrialism, in order to lay broad foundations of material well-being for the society of the future. The worst of these justifications is, that they are generally addressed to the very people engaged, body and soul, in the movement in question; at all events, that they are always seized with the greatest avidity by these people, and taken by them as quite justifying their life; and that thus they tend to harden them in their sins. Now, culture admits the necessity of the movement towards fortune-making and exaggerated industrialism, readily allows that the future may derive benefit from it; but insists, at the same time, that the passing generations of industrialists, — forming, for the most part, the stout main body of Philistinism, — are sacrificed to it. In the same way, the result of all the games and sports which occupy the passing generation of boys and young men may be the establishment of a better and sounder physical type for the future to work with. Culture does not set itself against the games and sports; it congratulates the future, and hopes it will make a good use of its improved physical basis; but it points out that our passing generation of boys and young men is, meantime, sacrificed. Puritanism was perhaps necessary to develop the moral fibre of the English race, Nonconformity to break the yoke of ecclesiastical domination over men's minds and to prepare the way for freedom of thought in the distant future; still, culture points out that the harmonious perfection of generations of Puritans and Nonconformists has been, in consequence, sacrificed. Freedom of speech may be necessary for the society of the future, but the young lions[1] of the *Daily Telegraph* in the meanwhile are sacrificed. A voice for every man in his country's govern-

ment may be necessary for the society of the future, but meanwhile Mr. Beales[1] and Mr. Bradlaugh[2] are sacrificed.

Oxford, the Oxford of the past, has many faults; and she has heavily paid for them in defeat, in isolation, in want of hold upon the modern world. Yet we in Oxford, brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth, — the truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection. When I insist on this, I am all in the faith and tradition of Oxford. I say boldly that this our sentiment for beauty and sweetness, our sentiment against hideousness and rawness, has been at the bottom of our attachment to so many beaten causes, of our opposition to so many triumphant movements. And the sentiment is true, and has never been wholly defeated, and has shown its power even in its defeat. We have not won our political battles, we have not carried our main points, we have not stopped our adversaries' advance, we have not marched victoriously with the modern world; but we have told silently upon the mind of the country, we have prepared currents of feeling which sap our adversaries' position when it seems gained, we have kept up our own communications with the future. Look at the course of the great movement which shook Oxford to its centre some thirty years ago! It was directed, as any one who reads Dr. Newman's *Apology*[3] may see, against what in one word may be called "Liberalism." Liberalism prevailed; it was the appointed force to do the work of the hour; it was necessary, it was inevitable that it should prevail. The Oxford movement was broken, it failed; our wrecks are scattered on every shore: —

"Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?"[4]

But what was it, this liberalism, as Dr. Newman saw it, and as it really broke the Oxford movement? It was the great middle-class liberalism, which had for the cardinal points of its belief the Reform Bill of 1832,[1] and local self-government, in politics; in the social sphere, free-trade, unrestricted competition, and the making of large industrial fortunes; in the religious sphere, the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. I do not say that other and more intelligent forces than this were not opposed to the Oxford movement: but this was the force which really beat it; this was the force which Dr. Newman felt himself fighting with; this was the force which till only the other day seemed to be the paramount force in this country, and to be in possession of the future; this was the force whose achievements fill Mr. Lowe[2] with such inexpressible admiration, and whose rule he was so horror-struck to see threatened. And where is this great force of Philistinism now? It is thrust into the second rank, it is become a power of yesterday, it has lost the future. A new power has suddenly appeared, a power which it is impossible yet to judge fully, but which is certainly a wholly different force from middle-class liberalism; different in its cardinal points of belief, different in its tendencies in every sphere. It loves and admires neither the legislation of middle-class Parliaments, nor the local self-government of middle-class vestries, nor the unrestricted competition of middle-class industrialists, nor the dissidence of middle-class Dissent and the Protestantism of middle-class Protestant religion. I am not now praising this new force, or saying that its own ideals are better; all I say is, that they are wholly different. And who will estimate how much the currents of feeling created by Dr. Newman's movements, the keen desire

for beauty and sweetness which it nourished, the deep aversion it manifested to the hardness and vulgarity of middle-class liberalism, the strong light it turned on the hideous and grotesque illusions of middle-class Protestantism, — who will estimate how much all these contributed to swell the tide of secret dissatisfaction which has mined the ground under self-confident liberalism of the last thirty years, and has prepared the way for its sudden collapse and supersession? It is in this manner that the sentiment of Oxford for beauty and sweetness conquers, and in this manner long may it continue to conquer!

In this manner it works to the same end as culture, and there is plenty of work for it yet to do. I have said that the new and more democratic force which is now superseding our old middle-class liberalism cannot yet be rightly judged. It has its main tendencies still to form. We hear promises of its giving us administrative reform, law reform, reform of education, and I know not what; but those promises come rather from its advocates, wishing to make a good plea for it and to justify it for superseding middle-class liberalism, than from clear tendencies which it has itself yet developed. But meanwhile it has plenty of well-intentioned friends against whom culture may with advantage continue to uphold steadily its ideal of human perfection; that this is *an inward spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy.* Mr. Bright, who has a foot in both worlds, the world of middle-class liberalism and the world of democracy, but who brings most of his ideas from the world of middle-class liberalism in which he was bred, always inclines to inculcate that faith in machinery to which, as we have seen, Englishmen are so prone, and which

has been the bane of middle-class liberalism. He complains with a sorrowful indignation of people who "appear to have no proper estimate of the value of the franchise"; he leads his disciples to believe — what the Englishman is always too ready to believe — that the having a vote, like the having a large family, or a large business, or large muscles, has in itself some edifying and perfecting effect upon human nature. Or else he cries out to the democracy, — "the men," as he calls them, "upon whose shoulders the greatness of England rests," — he cries out to them: "See what you have done! I look over this country and see the cities you have built, the railroads you have made, the manufactures you have produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen! I see that you have converted by your labors what was once a wilderness, these islands, into a fruitful garden; I know that you have created this wealth, and are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world." Why, this is just the very style of laudation with which Mr. Roebuck or Mr. Lowe debauches the minds of the middle classes, and makes such Philistines of them. It is the same fashion of teaching a man to value himself not on what he *is*, not on his progress in sweetness and light, but on the number of the railroads he has constructed, or the bigness of the tabernacle he has built. Only the middle classes are told they have done it all with their energy, self-reliance, and capital, and the democracy are told they have done it all with their hands and sinews. But teaching the democracy to put its trust in achievements of this kind is merely training them to be Philistines to take the place of the Philistines whom they are superseding; and they, too, like the middle class,

will be encouraged to sit down at the banquet of the future without having on a wedding garment, and nothing excellent can then come from them. Those who know their besetting faults, those who have watched them and listened to them, or those who will read the instructive account recently given of them by one of themselves, the *Journeyman Engineer*, will agree that the idea which culture sets before us of perfection, — an increased spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy, — is an idea which the new democracy needs far more than the idea of the blessedness of the franchise, or the wonderfulness of its own industrial performances.

Other well-meaning friends of this new power are for leading it, not in the old ruts of middle-class Philistinism, but in ways which are naturally alluring to the feet of democracy, though in this country they are novel and untried ways. I may call them the ways of Jacobinism.[1] Violent indignation with the past, abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future, — these are the ways of Jacobinism. Mr. Frederic Harrison[2] and other disciples of Comte,[3] — one of them, Mr. Congreve,[4] is an old friend of mine, and I am glad to have an opportunity of publicly expressing my respect for his talents and character, — are among the friends of democracy who are for leading it in paths of this kind. Mr. Frederic Harrison is very hostile to culture, and from a natural enough motive; for culture is the eternal opponent of the two things which are the signal marks of Jacobinism, — its fierceness, and its addiction to an abstract system. Culture is always assigning to system-makers

and systems a smaller share in the bent of human destiny than their friends like. A current in people's minds sets towards new ideas; people are dissatisfied with their old narrow stock of Philistine ideas, Anglo-Saxon ideas, or any other; and some man, some Bentham [1] or Comte, who has the real merit of having early and strongly felt and helped the new current, but who brings plenty of narrowness and mistakes of his own into his feeling and help of it, is credited with being the author of the whole current, the fit person to be entrusted with its regulation and to guide the human race.

The excellent German historian of the mythology of Rome, Preller,[2] relating the introduction at Rome under the Tarquins of the worship of Apollo, the god of light, healing, and reconciliation, will have us observe that it was not so much the Tarquins who brought to Rome the new worship of Apollo, as a current in the mind of the Roman people which set powerfully at that time towards a new worship of this kind, and away from the old run of Latin and Sabine religious ideas. In a similar way, culture directs our attention to the natural current there is in human affairs, and to its continual working, and will not let us rivet our faith upon any one man and his doings. It makes us see not only his good side, but also how much in him was of necessity limited and transient; nay, it even feels a pleasure, a sense of an increased freedom and of an ampler future, in so doing.

I remember, when I was under the influence of a mind to which I feel the greatest obligations, the mind of a man who was the very incarnation of sanity and clear sense, a man the most considerable, it seems to me, whom America has yet produced, — Benjamin Franklin, — I remember the relief with which, after

long feeling the sway of Franklin's imperturbable common-sense, I came upon a project of his for a new version of the Book of Job,[1] to replace the old version, the style of which, says Franklin, has become obsolete, and thence less agreeable. "I give," he continues, "a few verses, which may serve as a sample of the kind of version I would recommend." We all recollect the famous verse in our translation: "Then Satan answered the Lord and said: 'Doth Job fear God for nought?'" Franklin makes this: "Does your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?" I well remember how, when first I read that, I drew a deep breath of relief and said to myself: "After all, there is a stretch of humanity beyond Franklin's victorious good sense!" So, after hearing Bentham cried loudly up as the renovator of modern society, and Bentham's mind and ideas proposed as the rulers of our future, I open the *Deontology*.[2] There I read: "While Xenophon was writing his history and Euclid teaching geometry, Socrates and Plato were talking nonsense under pretense of talking wisdom and morality. This morality of theirs consisted in words; this wisdom of theirs was the denial of matters known to every man's experience." From the moment of reading that, I am delivered from the bondage of Bentham! the fanaticism of his adherents can touch me no longer. I feel the inadequacy of his mind and ideas for supplying the rule of human society, for perfection.

Culture tends always thus to deal with the men of a system, of disciples, of a school; with men like Comte, or the late Mr. Buckle,[3] or Mr. Mill.[4] However much it may find to admire in these personages, or in some of them, it nevertheless remembers the

text: "Be not ye called Rabbi!" and it soon passes on from any Rabbi. But Jacobinism loves a Rabbi; it does not want to pass on from its Rabbi in pursuit of a future and still unreached perfection; it wants its Rabbi and his ideas to stand for perfection, that they may with the more authority recast the world; and for Jacobinism, therefore, culture, — eternally passing onwards and seeking, — is an impertinence and an offence. But culture, just because it resists this tendency of Jacobinism to impose on us a man with limitations and errors of his own along with the true ideas of which he is the organ, really does the world and Jacobinism itself a service.

So, too, Jacobinism, in its fierce hatred of the past and of those whom it makes liable for the sins of the past, cannot away with the inexhaustible indulgence proper to culture, the consideration of circumstances, the severe judgment of actions joined to the merciful judgment of persons. "The man of culture is in politics," cries Mr. Frederic Harrison, "one of the poorest mortals alive!" Mr. Frederic Harrison wants to be doing business, and he complains that the man of culture stops him with a "turn for small fault-finding, love of selfish ease, and indecision in action." Of what use is culture, he asks, except for "a critic of new books or a professor of *belles-lettres?*"[1] Why, it is of use because, in presence of the fierce exasperation which breathes, or rather, I may say, hisses through the whole production in which Mr. Frederic Harrison asks that question, it reminds us that the perfection of human nature is sweetness and light. It is of use, because, like religion, — that other effort after perfection, — it testifies that, where bitter envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work.

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness and light, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater! — the passion for making them *prevail*. It is not satisfied till we *all* come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a *national* glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive. Only it must be *real* thought and *real* beauty; *real* sweetness and *real* light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organizations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn

neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely, — nourished, and not bound by them.

This is the *social idea;* and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have labored to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanize it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light. Such a man was Abelard[1] in the Middle Ages, in spite of all his imperfections; and thence the boundless emotion and enthusiasm which Abelard excited. Such were Lessing[2] and Herder[3] in Germany, at the end of the last century; and their services to Germany were in this way inestimably precious. Generations will pass, and literary monuments will accumulate, and works far more perfect than the works of Lessing and Herder will be produced in Germany; and yet the names of these two men will fill a German with a reverence and enthusiasm such as the names of the most gifted masters will hardly awaken. And why? Because they *humanized* knowledge; because they broadened the basis of life and

intelligence; because they worked powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light, to make reason and the will of God prevail. With Saint Augustine they said: "Let us not leave thee alone to make in the secret of thy knowledge, as thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of light from darkness; let the children of thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the times; for the old order is passed, and the new arises; the night is spent, the day is come forth; and thou shalt crown the year with thy blessing, when thou shalt send forth laborers into thy harvest sown by other hands than theirs; when thou shalt send forth new laborers to new seed-times, whereof the harvest shall be not yet."[1]

HEBRAISM AND HELLENISM[1]

This fundamental ground is our preference of doing to thinking. Now this preference is a main element in our nature, and as we study it we find ourselves opening up a number of large questions on every side.

Let me go back for a moment to Bishop Wilson,[2] who says: "First, never go against the best light you have; secondly, take care that your light be not darkness." We show, as a nation, laudable energy and persistence in walking according to the best light we have, but are not quite careful enough, perhaps, to see that our light be not darkness. This is only another version of the old story that energy is our strong point and favorable characteristic, rather than intelligence. But we may give to this idea a more general form still, in which it will have a yet larger range of application. We may regard this energy driving at practice, this paramount sense of the obligation of duty, self-control, and work, this earnestness in going manfully with the best light we have, as one force. And we may regard the intelligence driving at those ideas which are, after all, the basis of right practice, the ardent sense for all the new and changing combinations of them which man's development brings with it, the indomitable impulse to know and adjust them perfectly, as another force. And these two forces we may regard as in some sense rivals, — rivals not by the necessity of their own nature, but as exhibited in man and his history, — and rivals dividing the empire of the world between them. And to give these forces names from the two races of men who have supplied

the most signal and splendid manifestations of them, we may call them respectively the forces of Hebraism and Hellenism. Hebraism and Hellenism, — between these two points of influence moves our world. At one time it feels more powerfully the attraction of one of them, at another time of the other; and it ought to be, though it never is, evenly and happily balanced between them.

The final aim of both Hellenism and Hebraism, as of all great spiritual disciplines, is no doubt the same: man's perfection or salvation. The very language which they both of them use in schooling us to reach this aim is often identical. Even when their language indicates by variation, — sometimes a broad variation, often a but slight and subtle variation, — the different courses of thought which are uppermost in each discipline, even then the unity of the final end and aim is still apparent. To employ the actual words of that discipline with which we ourselves are all of us most familiar, and the words of which, therefore, come most home to us, that final end and aim is "that we might be partakers of the divine nature."[1] These are the words of a Hebrew apostle, but of Hellenism and Hebraism alike this is, I say, the aim. When the two are confronted, as they very often are confronted, it is nearly always with what I may call a rhetorical purpose; the speaker's whole design is to exalt and enthrone one of the two, and he uses the other only as a foil and to enable him the better to give effect to his purpose. Obviously, with us, it is usually Hellenism which is thus reduced to minister to the triumph of Hebraism. There is a sermon on Greece and the Greek spirit by a man never to be mentioned without interest and respect, Frederick Robertson,[2] in which this rhetorical use of Greece and the Greek spirit,

and the inadequate exhibition of them necessarily consequent upon this, is almost ludicrous, and would be censurable if it were not to be explained by the exigencies of a sermon. On the other hand, Heinrich Heine,[1] and other writers of his sort give us the spectacle of the tables completely turned, and of Hebraism brought in just as a foil and contrast to Hellenism, and to make the superiority of Hellenism more manifest. In both these cases there is injustice and misrepresentation. The aim and end of both Hebraism and Hellenism is, as I have said, one and the same, and this aim and end is august and admirable.

Still, they pursue this aim by very different courses. The uppermost idea with Hellenism is to see things as they really are; the uppermost idea with Hebraism is conduct and obedience. Nothing can do away with this ineffaceable difference. The Greek quarrel with the body and its desires is, that they hinder right thinking; the Hebrew quarrel with them is, that they hinder right acting. "He that keepeth the law, happy is he";[2] "Blessed is the man that feareth the Eternal, that delighteth greatly in his commandments";—[3] that is the Hebrew notion of felicity; and, pursued with passion and tenacity, this notion would not let the Hebrew rest till, as is well known, he had at last got out of the law a network of prescriptions to enwrap his whole life, to govern every moment of it, every impulse, every action. The Greek notion of felicity, on the other hand, is perfectly conveyed in these words of a great French moralist: "*C'est le bonheur des hommes*," — when? when they abhor that which is evil? — no; when they exercise themselves in the law of the Lord day and night? — no; when they die daily? — no; when they walk about the New Jerusalem with palms in their hands? — no; but when they

think aright, when their thought hits: "*quand ils pensent juste.*" At the bottom of both the Greek and the Hebrew notion is the desire, native in man, for reason and the will of God, the feeling after the universal order, — in a word, the love of God. But, while Hebraism seizes upon certain plain, capital intimations of the universal order, and rivets itself, one may say, with unequalled grandeur of earnestness and intensity on the study and observance of them, the bent of Hellenism is to follow, with flexible activity, the whole play of the universal order, to be apprehensive of missing any part of it, of sacrificing one part to another, to slip away from resting in this or that intimation of it, however capital. An unclouded clearness of mind, an unimpeded play of thought, is what this bent drives at. The governing idea of Hellenism is *spontaneity of consciousness;* that of Hebraism, *strictness of conscience.*

Christianity changed nothing in this essential bent of Hebraism to set doing above knowing. Self-conquest, self-devotion, the following not our own individual will, but the will of God, *obedience*, is the fundamental idea of this form, also, of the discipline to which we have attached the general name of Hebraism. Only, as the old law and the network of prescriptions with which it enveloped human life were evidently a motive-power not driving and searching enough to produce the result aimed at, — patient continuance in well-doing, self-conquest, — Christianity substituted for them boundless devotion to that inspiring and affecting pattern of self-conquest offered by Jesus Christ; and by the new motive-power, of which the essence was this, though the love and admiration of Christian churches have for centuries been employed in varying, amplifying, and adorning the plain description of it, Chris-

tianity, as St. Paul truly says, "establishes the law,"[1] and in the strength of the ampler power which she has thus supplied to fulfill it, has accomplished the miracles, which we all see, of her history.

So long as we do not forget that both Hellenism and Hebraism are profound and admirable manifestations of man's life, tendencies, and powers, and that both of them aim at a like final result, we can hardly insist too strongly on the divergence of line and of operation with which they proceed. It is a divergence so great that it most truly, as the prophet Zechariah says, "has raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece!"[2] The difference whether it is by doing or by knowing that we set most store, and the practical consequences which follow from this difference, leave their mark on all the history of our race and of its development. Language may be abundantly quoted from both Hellenism and Hebraism to make it seem that one follows the same current as the other towards the same goal. They are, truly, borne towards the same goal; but the currents which bear them are infinitely different. It is true, Solomon will praise knowing: "Understanding is a well-spring of life unto him that hath it."[3] And in the New Testament, again, Jesus Christ is a "light,"[4] and "truth makes us free."[5] It is true, Aristotle will undervalue knowing: "In what concerns virtue," says he, "three things are necessary — knowledge, deliberate will, and perseverance; but, whereas the two last are all-important, the first is a matter of little importance."[6] It is true that with the same impatience with which St. James enjoins a man to be not a forgetful hearer, but a *doer of the work*,[7] Epictetus[8] exhorts us to *do* what we have demonstrated to ourselves we ought to do; or he taunts us with futility, for being armed at all points to prove

that lying is wrong, yet all the time continuing to lie. It is true, Plato, in words which are almost the words of the New Testament or the Imitation, calls life a learning to die.[1] But underneath the superficial agreement the fundamental divergence still subsists. The understanding of Solomon is "the walking in the way of the commandments"; this is "the way of peace," and it is of this that blessedness comes. In the New Testament, the truth which gives us the peace of God and makes us free, is the love of Christ constraining us[2] to crucify, as he did, and with a like purpose of moral regeneration, the flesh with its affections and lusts, and thus establishing, as we have seen, the law. The moral virtues, on the other hand, are with Aristotle but the porch[3] and access to the intellectual, and with these last is blessedness. That partaking of the divine life, which both Hellenism and Hebraism, as we have said, fix as their crowning aim, Plato expressly denies to the man of practical virtue merely, of self-conquest with any other motive than that of perfect intellectual vision. He reserves it for the lover of pure knowledge, of seeing things as they really are, — the φιλομαθής.[4]

Both Hellenism and Hebraism arise out of the wants of human nature, and address themselves to satisfying those wants. But their methods are so different, they lay stress on such different points, and call into being by their respective disciplines such different activities, that the face which human nature presents when it passes from the hands of one of them to those of the other, is no longer the same. To get rid of one's ignorance, to see things as they are, and by seeing them as they are to see them in their beauty, is the simple and attractive ideal which Hellenism holds out before human nature; and from the sim-

plicity and charm of this ideal, Hellenism, and human life in the hands of Hellenism, is invested with a kind of aërial ease, clearness, and radiancy; they are full of what we call sweetness and light. Difficulties are kept out of view, and the beauty and rationalness of the ideal have all our thoughts. "The best man is he who most tries to perfect himself, and the happiest man is he who most feels that he *is* perfecting himself," [1] — this account of the matter by Socrates, the true Socrates of the *Memorabilia*, has something so simple, spontaneous, and unsophisticated about it, that it seems to fill us with clearness and hope when we hear it. But there is a saying which I have heard attributed to Mr. Carlyle about Socrates — a very happy saying, whether it is really Mr. Carlyle's or not, — which excellently marks the essential point in which Hebraism differs from Hellenism. "Socrates," this saying goes, "is terribly *at ease in Zion*." Hebraism — and here is the source of its wonderful strength — has always been severely preoccupied with an awful sense of the impossibility of being at ease in Zion; of the difficulties which oppose themselves to man's pursuit or attainment of that perfection of which Socrates talks so hopefully, and, as from this point of view one might almost say, so glibly. It is all very well to talk of getting rid of one's ignorance, of seeing things in their reality, seeing them in their beauty; but how is this to be done when there is something which thwarts and spoils all our efforts?

This something is *sin;* and the space which sin fills in Hebraism, as compared with Hellenism, is indeed prodigious. This obstacle to perfection fills the whole scene, and perfection appears remote and rising away from earth, in the background. Under the name of sin, the difficulties of knowing oneself and conquering

oneself which impede man's passage to perfection, become, for Hebraism, a positive, active entity hostile to man, a mysterious power which I heard Dr. Pusey[1] the other day, in one of his impressive sermons, compare to a hideous hunchback seated on our shoulders, and which it is the main business of our lives to hate and oppose. The discipline of the Old Testament may be summed up as a discipline teaching us to abhor and flee from sin; the discipline of the New Testament, as a discipline teaching us to die to it. As Hellenism speaks of thinking clearly, seeing things in their essence and beauty, as a grand and precious feat for man to achieve, so Hebraism speaks of becoming conscious of sin, of awakening to a sense of sin, as a feat of this kind. It is obvious to what wide divergence these differing tendencies, actively followed, must lead. As one passes and repasses from Hellenism to Hebraism, from Plato to St. Paul, one feels inclined to rub one's eyes and ask oneself whether man is indeed a gentle and simple being, showing the traces of a noble and divine nature; or an unhappy chained captive, laboring with groanings that cannot be uttered to free himself from the body of this death.

Apparently it was the Hellenic conception of human nature which was unsound, for the world could not live by it. Absolutely to call it unsound, however, is to fall into the common error of its Hebraizing enemies; but it was unsound at that particular moment of man's development, it was premature. The indispensable basis of conduct and self-control, the platform upon which alone the perfection aimed at by Greece can come into bloom, was not to be reached by our race so easily; centuries of probation and discipline were needed to bring us to it. Therefore the bright promise of Hellenism faded, and Hebraism

ruled the world. Then was seen that astonishing spectacle, so well marked by the often-quoted words of the prophet Zechariah, when men of all languages and nations took hold of the skirt of him that was a Jew, saying: — "*We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.*"[1] And the Hebraism which thus received and ruled a world all gone out of the way and altogether become unprofitable, was, and could not but be, the later, the more spiritual, the more attractive development of Hebraism. It was Christianity; that is to say, Hebraism aiming at self-conquest and rescue from the thrall of vile affections, not by obedience to the letter of a law, but by conformity to the image of a self-sacrificing example. To a world stricken with moral enervation Christianity offered its spectacle of an inspired self-sacrifice; to men who refused themselves nothing, it showed one who refused himself everything; — "*my Saviour banished joy!*"[2] says George Herbert. When the *alma Venus*, the life-giving and joy-giving power of nature, so fondly cherished by the pagan world, could not save her followers from self-dissatisfaction and ennui, the severe words of the apostle came bracingly and refreshingly: "Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."[3] Through age after age and generation after generation, our race, or all that part of our race which was most living and progressive, was *baptized into a death;* and endeavored, by suffering in the flesh, to cease from sin. Of this endeavor, the animating labors and afflictions of early Christianity, the touching asceticism of mediæval Christianity, are the great historical manifestations. Literary monuments of it, each in its own way incomparable, remain in the *Epistles* of St. Paul, in St.

Augustine's *Confessions*, and in the two original and simplest books of the *Imitation*.[1]

Of two disciplines laying their main stress, the one, on clear intelligence, the other, on firm obedience; the one, on comprehensively knowing the ground of one's duty, the other, on diligently practising it; the one, on taking all possible care (to use Bishop Wilson's words again) that the light we have be not darkness, the other, that according to the best light we have we diligently walk, — the priority naturally belongs to that discipline which braces all man's moral powers, and founds for him an indispensable basis of character. And, therefore, it is justly said of the Jewish people, who were charged with setting powerfully forth that side of the divine order to which the words *conscience* and *self-conquest* point, that they were "entrusted with the oracles of God";[2] as it is justly said of Christianity, which followed Judaism and which set forth this side with a much deeper effectiveness and a much wider influence, that the wisdom of the old pagan world was foolishness[3] compared to it. No words of devotion and admiration can be too strong to render thanks to these beneficent forces which have so borne forward humanity in its appointed work of coming to the knowledge and possession of itself; above all, in those great moments when their action was the wholesomest and the most necessary.

But the evolution of these forces, separately and in themselves, is not the whole evolution of humanity, — their single history is not the whole history of man; whereas their admirers are always apt to make it stand for the whole history. Hebraism and Hellenism are, neither of them, the *law* of human development, as their admirers are prone to make them; they are, each of them, *contributions* to human development, —

august contributions, invaluable contributions; and each showing itself to us more august, more invaluable, more preponderant over the other, according to the moment in which we take them, and the relation in which we stand to them. The nations of our modern world, children of that immense and salutary movement which broke up the pagan world, inevitably stand to Hellenism in a relation which dwarfs it, and to Hebraism in a relation which magnifies it. They are inevitably prone to take Hebraism as the law of human development, and not as simply a contribution to it, however precious. And yet the lesson must perforce be learned, that the human spirit is wider than the most priceless of the forces which bear it onward, and that to the whole development of man Hebraism itself is, like Hellenism, but a contribution.

Perhaps we may help ourselves to see this clearer by an illustration drawn from the treatment of a single great idea which has profoundly engaged the human spirit, and has given it eminent opportunities for showing its nobleness and energy. It surely must be perceived that the idea of immortality, as this idea rises in its generality before the human spirit, is something grander, truer, and more satisfying, than it is in the particular forms by which St. Paul, in the famous fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians, and Plato, in the *Phædo*,[1] endeavor to develop and establish it. Surely we cannot but feel, that the argumentation with which the Hebrew apostle goes about to expound this great idea is, after all, confused and inconclusive; and that the reasoning, drawn from analogies of likeness and equality, which is employed upon it by the Greek philosopher, is over-subtle and sterile. Above and beyond the inadequate solutions which Hebraism and Hellenism here attempt, extends the im-

mense and august problem itself, and the human spirit which gave birth to it. And this single illustration may suggest to us how the same thing happens in other cases also.

But meanwhile, by alternations of Hebraism and Hellenism, of a man's intellectual and moral impulses, of the effort to see things as they really are, and the effort to win peace by self-conquest, the human spirit proceeds; and each of these two forces has its appointed hours of culmination and seasons of rule. As the great movement of Christianity was a triumph of Hebraism and man's moral impulses, so the great movement which goes by the name of the Renascence [1] was an uprising and reinstatement of man's intellectual impulses and of Hellenism. We in England, the devoted children of Protestantism, chiefly know the Renascence by its subordinate and secondary side of the Reformation. The Reformation has been often called a Hebraizing revival, a return to the ardor and sincereness of primitive Christianity. No one, however, can study the development of Protestantism and of Protestant churches without feeling that into the Reformation, too, — Hebraizing child of the Renascence and offspring of its fervor, rather than its intelligence, as it undoubtedly was, — the subtle Hellenic leaven of the Renascence found its way, and that the exact respective parts, in the Reformation, of Hebraism and of Hellenism, are not easy to separate. But what we may with truth say is, that all which Protestantism was to itself clearly conscious of, all which it succeeded in clearly setting forth in words, had the characters of Hebraism rather than of Hellenism. The Reformation was strong, in that it was an earnest return to the Bible and to doing from the heart the will of God as there written. It was weak, in that it never consciously

grasped or applied the central idea of the Renascence, — the Hellenic idea of pursuing, in all lines of activity, the law and science, to use Plato's words, of things as they really are. Whatever direct superiority, therefore, Protestantism had over Catholicism was a moral superiority, a superiority arising out of its greater sincerity and earnestness, — at the moment of its apparition at any rate, — in dealing with the heart and conscience. Its pretensions to an intellectual superiority are in general quite illusory. For Hellenism, for the thinking side in man as distinguished from the acting side, the attitude of mind of Protestantism towards the Bible in no respect differs from the attitude of mind of Catholicism towards the Church. The mental habit of him who imagines that Balaam's ass spoke, in no respect differs from the mental habit of him who imagines that a Madonna of wood or stone winked; and the one, who says that God's Church makes him believe what he believes, and the other, who says that God's Word makes him believe what he believes, are for the philosopher perfectly alike in not really and truly knowing, when they say *God's Church* and *God's Word*, what it is they say, or whereof they affirm.

In the sixteenth century, therefore, Hellenism reentered the world, and again stood in presence of Hebraism, — a Hebraism renewed and purged. Now, it has not been enough observed, how, in the seventeenth century, a fate befell Hellenism in some respects analogous to that which befell it at the commencement of our era. The Renascence, that great reawakening of Hellenism, that irresistible return of humanity to nature and to seeing things as they are, which in art, in literature, and in physics, produced such splendid fruits, had, like the anterior Hellenism of the pagan world, a side of moral weakness and of relaxation or

insensibility of the moral fibre, which in Italy showed itself with the most startling plainness, but which in France, England, and other countries was very apparent, too. Again this loss of spiritual balance, this exclusive preponderance given to man's perceiving and knowing side, this unnatural defect of his feeling and acting side, provoked a reaction. Let us trace that reaction where it most nearly concerns us.

Science has now made visible to everybody the great and pregnant elements of difference which lie in race, and in how signal a manner they make the genius and history of an Indo-European people vary from those of a Semitic people. Hellenism is of Indo-European growth, Hebraism is of Semitic growth; and we English, a nation of Indo-European stock, seem to belong naturally to the movement of Hellenism. But nothing more strongly marks the essential unity of man, than the affinities we can perceive, in this point or that, between members of one family of peoples and members of another. And no affinity of this kind is more strongly marked than that likeness in the strength and prominence of the moral fibre, which, notwithstanding immense elements of difference, knits in some special sort the genius and history of us English, and our American descendants across the Atlantic, to the genius and history of the Hebrew people. Puritanism, which has been so great a power in the English nation, and in the strongest part of the English nation, was originally the reaction in the seventeenth century of the conscience and moral sense of our race, against the moral indifference and lax rule of conduct which in the sixteenth century came in with the Renascence. It was a reaction of Hebraism against Hellenism; and it powerfully manifested itself, as was natural, in a people with much of what we call a Hebraizing turn, with a signal

affinity for the bent which was the master-bent of Hebrew life. Eminently Indo-European by its *humor*, by the power it shows, through this gift, of imaginatively acknowledging the multiform aspects of the problem of life, and of thus getting itself unfixed from its own over-certainty, of smiling at its own over-tenacity, our race has yet (and a great part of its strength lies here), in matters of practical life and moral conduct, a strong share of the assuredness, the tenacity, the intensity of the Hebrews. This turn manifested itself in Puritanism, and has had a great part in shaping our history for the last two hundred years. Undoubtedly it checked and changed amongst us that movement of the Renascence which we see producing in the reign of Elizabeth such wonderful fruits. Undoubtedly it stopped the prominent rule and direct development of that order of ideas which we call by the name of Hellenism, and gave the first rank to a different order of ideas. Apparently, too, as we said of the former defeat of Hellenism, if Hellenism was defeated, this shows that Hellenism was imperfect, and that its ascendency at that moment would not have been for the world's good.

Yet there is a very important difference between the defeat inflicted on Hellenism by Christianity eighteen hundred years ago, and the check given to the Renascence by Puritanism. The greatness of the difference is well measured by the difference in force, beauty, significance, and usefulness, between primitive Christianity and Protestantism. Eighteen hundred years ago it was altogether the hour of Hebraism. Primitive Christianity was legitimately and truly the ascendant force in the world at that time, and the way of mankind's progress lay through its full development. Another hour in man's development began in

the fifteenth century, and the main road of his progress then lay for a time through Hellenism. Puritanism was no longer the central current of the world's progress, it was a side stream crossing the central current and checking it. The cross and the check may have been necessary and salutary, but that does not do away with the essential difference between the main stream of man's advance and a cross or side stream. For more than two hundred years the main stream of man's advance has moved towards knowing himself and the world, seeing things as they are, spontaneity of consciousness; the main impulse of a great part, and that the strongest part, of our nation has been towards strictness of conscience. They have made the secondary the principal at the wrong moment, and the principal they have at the wrong moment treated as secondary. This contravention of the natural order has produced, as such contravention always must produce, a certain confusion and false movement, of which we are now beginning to feel, in almost every direction, the inconvenience. In all directions our habitual causes of action seem to be losing efficaciousness, credit, and control, both with others and even with ourselves. Everywhere we see the beginnings of confusion, and we want a clue to some sound order and authority. This we can only get by going back upon the actual instincts and forces which rule our life, seeing them as they really are, connecting them with other instincts and forces, and enlarging our whole view and rule of life.

EQUALITY[1]

When we talk of man's advance towards his full humanity, we think of an advance, not along one line only, but several. Certain races and nations, as we know, are on certain lines preëminent and representative. The Hebrew nation was preëminent on one great line. "What nation," it was justly asked by their lawgiver, "hath statutes and judgments so righteous as the law which I set before you this day? Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations which shall hear all these statutes and say: Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people!" The Hellenic race was preëminent on other lines. Isocrates[2] could say of Athens: "Our city has left the rest of the world so far behind in philosophy and eloquence, that those educated by Athens have become the teachers of the rest of mankind; and so well has she done her part, that the name of Greeks seems no longer to stand for a race but to stand for intelligence itself, and they who share in our culture are called Greeks even before those who are merely of our own blood." The power of intellect and science, the power of beauty, the power of social life and manners, — these are what Greece so felt, and fixed, and may stand for. They are great elements in our humanization. The power of conduct is another great element; and this was so felt and fixed by Israel that we can never with justice refuse to permit Israel, in spite of all his shortcomings, to stand for it.

So you see that in being humanized we have to move

along several lines, and that on certain lines certain nations find their strength and take a lead. We may elucidate the thing yet further. Nations now existing may be said to feel or to have felt the power of this or that element in our humanization so signally that they are characterized by it. No one who knows this country would deny that it is characterized, in a remarkable degree, by a sense of the power of conduct. Our feeling for religion is one part of this; our industry is another. What foreigners so much remark in us — our public spirit, our love, amidst all our liberty, for public order and for stability — are parts of it too. Then the power of beauty was so felt by the Italians that their art revived, as we know, the almost lost idea of beauty, and the serious and successful pursuit of it. Cardinal Antonelli,[1] speaking to me about the education of the common people in Rome, said that they were illiterate, indeed, but whoever mingled with them at any public show, and heard them pass judgment on the beauty or ugliness of what came before them, — "*e brutto*," "*e bello*," — would find that their judgment agreed admirably, in general, with just what the most cultivated people would say. Even at the present time, then, the Italians are preëminent in feeling the power of beauty. The power of knowledge, in the same way, is eminently an influence with the Germans. This by no means implies, as is sometimes supposed, a high and fine general culture. What it implies is a strong sense of the necessity of knowing *scientifically*, as the expression is, the things which have to be known by us; of knowing them systematically, by the regular and right process, and in the only real way. And this sense the Germans especially have. Finally, there is the power of social life and manners. And even the Athenians themselves, per-

haps, have hardly felt this power so much as the French.

Voltaire, in a famous passage[1] where he extols the age of Louis the Fourteenth and ranks it with the chief epochs in the civilization of our race, has to specify the gift bestowed on us by the age of Louis the Fourteenth, as the age of Pericles, for instance, bestowed on us its art and literature, and the Italian Renascence its revival of art and literature. And Voltaire shows all his acuteness in fixing on the gift to name. It is not the sort of gift which we expect to see named. The great gift of the age of Louis the Fourteenth to the world, says Voltaire, was this: *l'esprit de société*, the spirit of society, the social spirit. And another French writer, looking for the good points in the old French nobility, remarks that this at any rate is to be said in their favor: they established a high and charming ideal of social intercourse and manners, for a nation formed to profit by such an ideal, and which has profited by it ever since. And in America, perhaps, we see the disadvantages of having social equality before there has been any such high standard of social life and manners formed.

We are not disposed in England, most of us, to attach all this importance to social intercourse and manners. Yet Burke says: "There ought to be a system of manners in every nation which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish." And the power of social life and manners is truly, as we have seen, one of the great elements in our humanization. Unless we have cultivated it, we are incomplete. The impulse for cultivating it is not, indeed, a moral impulse. It is by no means identical with the moral impulse to help our neighbor and to do him good. Yet in many ways it works to a like end. It brings men together, makes

them feel the need of one another, be considerate of one another, understand one another. But, above all things, it is a promoter of equality. It is by the humanity of their manners that men are made equal. "A man thinks to show himself my equal," says Goethe, "by being *grob*, — that is to say, coarse and rude; he does not show himself my equal, he shows himself *grob*." But a community having humane manners is a community of equals, and in such a community great social inequalities have really no meaning, while they are at the same time a menace and an embarrassment to perfect ease of social intercourse. A community with the spirit of society is eminently, therefore, a community with the spirit of equality. A nation with a genius for society, like the French or the Athenians, is irresistibly drawn towards equality. From the first moment when the French people, with its congenital sense for the power of social intercourse and manners, came into existence, it was on the road to equality. When it had once got a high standard of social manners abundantly established, and at the same time the natural, material necessity for the feudal inequality of classes and property pressed upon it no longer, the French people introduced equality and made the French Revolution. It was not the spirit of philanthropy which mainly impelled the French to that Revolution, neither was it the spirit of envy, neither was it the love of abstract ideas, though all these did something towards it; but what did most was the spirit of society.

The well-being of the many comes out more and more distinctly, in proportion as time goes on, as the object we must pursue. An individual or a class, concentrating their efforts upon their own well-being exclusively, do but beget troubles both for others and for themselves also. No individual life can be truly

prosperous, passed, as Obermann says, in the midst of men who suffer; *passée au milieu des générations qui souffrent.* To the noble soul, it cannot be happy; to the ignoble, it cannot be secure. Socialistic and communistic schemes have generally, however, a fatal defect; they are content with too low and material a standard of well-being. That instinct of perfection, which is the master-power in humanity, always rebels at this, and frustrates the work. Many are to be made partakers of well-being, true; but the ideal of well-being is not to be, on that account, lowered and coarsened. M. de Laveleye,[1] the political economist, who is a Belgian and a Protestant, and whose testimony, therefore, we may the more readily take about France, says that France, being the country of Europe where the soil is more divided than anywhere except in Switzerland and Norway, is at the same time the country where material well-being is most widely spread, where wealth has of late years increased most, and where population is least outrunning the limits, which, for the comfort and progress of the working classes themselves, seem necessary. This may go for a good deal. It supplies an answer to what Sir Erskine May[2] says about the bad effects of equality upon French prosperity. But I will quote to you from Mr. Hamerton[3] what goes, I think, for yet more. Mr. Hamerton is an excellent observer and reporter, and has lived for many years in France. He says of the French peasantry that they are exceedingly ignorant. So they are. But he adds: "They are at the same time full of intelligence; their manners are excellent, they have delicate perceptions, they have tact, they have a certain refinement which a brutalized peasantry could not possibly have. If you talk to one of them at his own home, or in his field, he will enter into conversation

with you quite easily, and sustain his part in a perfectly becoming way, with a pleasant combination of dignity and quiet humor. The interval between him and a Kentish laborer is enormous."

This is, indeed, worth your attention. Of course all mankind are, as Mr. Gladstone says, of our own flesh and blood. But you know how often it happens in England that a cultivated person, a person of the sort that Mr. Charles Sumner[1] describes, talking to one of the lower class, or even of the middle class, feels and cannot but feel, that there is somehow a wall of partition between himself and the other, that they seem to belong to two different worlds. Thoughts, feelings, perceptions, susceptibilities, language, manners, — everything is different. Whereas, with a French peasant, the most cultivated man may find himself in sympathy, may feel that he is talking to an equal. This is an experience which has been made a thousand times, and which may be made again any day. And it may be carried beyond the range of mere conversation, it may be extended to things like pleasures, recreations, eating and drinking, and so on. In general the pleasures, recreations, eating and drinking of English people, when once you get below that class which Mr. Charles Sumner calls the class of gentlemen, are to one of that class unpalatable and impossible. In France there is not this incompatibility. Whether he mix with high or low, the gentleman feels himself in a world not alien or repulsive, but a world where people make the same sort of demands upon life, in things of this sort, which he himself does. In all these respects France is the country where the people, as distinguished from a wealthy refined class, most lives what we call a humane life, the life of civilized man.

Of course, fastidious persons can and do pick holes

in it. There is just now, in France, a *noblesse* newly revived, full of pretension, full of airs and graces and disdains; but its sphere is narrow, and out of its own sphere no one cares very much for it. There is a general equality in a humane kind of life. This is the secret of the passionate attachment with which France inspires all Frenchmen, in spite of her fearful troubles, her checked prosperity, her disconnected units, and the rest of it. There is so much of the goodness and agreeableness of life there, and for so many. It is the secret of her having been able to attach so ardently to her the German and Protestant people of Alsace,[1] while we have been so little able to attach the Celtic and Catholic people of Ireland. France brings the Alsatians into a social system so full of the goodness and agreeableness of life; we offer to the Irish no such attraction. It is the secret, finally, of the prevalence which we have remarked in other continental countries of a legislation tending, like that of France, to social equality. The social system which equality creates in France is, in the eyes of others, such a giver of the goodness and agreeableness of life, that they seek to get the goodness by getting the equality.

Yet France has had her fearful troubles, as Sir Erskine May justly says. She suffers too, he adds, from demoralization and intellectual stoppage. Let us admit, if he likes, this to be true also. His error is that he attributes all this to equality. Equality, as we have seen, has brought France to a really admirable and enviable pitch of humanization in one important line. And this, the work of equality, is so much a good in Sir Erskine May's eyes, that he has mistaken it for the whole of which it is a part, frankly identifies it with civilization, and is inclined to pronounce France the most civilized of nations.

But we have seen how much goes to full humanization, to true civilization, besides the power of social life and manners. There is the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty. The power of conduct is the greatest of all. And without in the least wishing to preach, I must observe, as a mere matter of natural fact and experience, that for the power of conduct France has never had anything like the same sense which she has had for the power of social life and manners. Michelet,[1] himself a Frenchman, gives us the reason why the Reformation did not succeed in France. It did not succeed, he says, because *la France ne voulait pas de réforme morale* — moral reform France would not have; and the Reformation was above all a moral movement. The sense in France for the power of conduct has not greatly deepened, I think, since. The sense for the power of intellect and knowledge has not been adequate either. The sense for beauty has not been adequate. Intelligence and beauty have been, in general, but so far reached, as they can be and are reached by men who, of the elements of perfect humanization, lay thorough hold upon one only, — the power of social intercourse and manners. I speak of France in general; she has had, and she has, individuals who stand out and who form exceptions. Well, then, if a nation laying no sufficient hold upon the powers of beauty and knowledge, and a most failing and feeble hold upon the power of conduct, comes to demoralization and intellectual stoppage and fearful troubles, we need not be inordinately surprised. What we should rather marvel at is the healing and bountiful operation of Nature, whereby the laying firm hold on one real element in our humanization has had for France results so beneficent.

And thus, when Sir Erskine May gets bewildered

between France's equality and fearful troubles on the one hand, and the civilization of France on the other, let us suggest to him that perhaps he is bewildered by his data because he combines them ill. France has not exemplary disaster and ruin as the fruits of equality, and at the same time, and independently of this, an exemplary civilization. She has a large measure of happiness and success as the fruits of equality, and she has a very large measure of dangers and troubles as the fruits of something else.

We have more to do, however, than to help Sir Erskine May out of his scrape about France. We have to see whether the considerations which we have been employing may not be of use to us about England.

We shall not have much difficulty in admitting whatever good is to be said of ourselves, and we will try not to be unfair by excluding all that is not so favorable. Indeed, our less favorable side is the one which we should be the most anxious to note, in order that we may mend it. But we will begin with the good. Our people has energy and honesty as its good characteristics. We have a strong sense for the chief power in the life and progress of man, — the power of conduct. So far we speak of the English people as a whole. Then we have a rich, refined, and splendid aristocracy. And we have, according to Mr. Charles Sumner's acute and true remark, a class of gentlemen, not of the nobility, but well-bred, cultivated, and refined, larger than is to be found in any other country. For these last we have Mr. Sumner's testimony. As to the splendor of our aristocracy, all the world is agreed. Then we have a middle class and a lower class; and they, after all, are the immense bulk of the nation.

Let us see how the civilization of these classes appears to a Frenchman, who has witnessed, in his own country, the considerable humanization of these classes by equality. To such an observer our middle class divides itself into a serious portion and a gay or rowdy portion; both are a marvel to him. With the gay or rowdy portion we need not much concern ourselves; we shall figure it to our minds sufficiently if we conceive it as the source of that war-song produced in these recent days of excitement: —

"We don't want to fight, but by jingo, if we do,
We 've got the ships, we 've got the men, and we 've got the money too." [1]

We may also partly judge its standard of life, and the needs of its nature, by the modern English theatre, perhaps the most contemptible in Europe. But the real strength of the English middle class is in its serious portion. And of this a Frenchman, who was here some little time ago as the correspondent, I think, of the *Siècle* newspaper, and whose letters were afterwards published in a volume, writes as follows. He had been attending some of the Moody and Sankey [2] meetings, and he says: "To understand the success of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, one must be familiar with English manners, one must know the mind-deadening influence of a narrow Biblism, one must have experienced the sense of acute ennui, which the aspect and the frequentation of this great division of English society produce in others, the want of elasticity and the chronic ennui which characterize this class itself, petrified in a narrow Protestantism and in a perpetual reading of the Bible."

You know the French; — a little more Biblism, one may take leave to say, would do them no harm. But an audience like this — and here, as I said, is the ad-

vantage of an audience like this — will have no difficulty in admitting the amount of truth which there is in the Frenchman's picture. It is the picture of a class which, driven by its sense for the power of conduct, in the beginning of the seventeenth century entered, — as I have more than once said, and as I may more than once have occasion in future to say, — *entered the prison of Puritanism, and had the key turned upon its spirit there for two hundred years.*[1] They did not know, good and earnest people as they were, that to the building up of human life there belong all those other powers also, — the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, the power of social life and manners. And something, by what they became, they gained, and the whole nation with them; they deepened and fixed for this nation the sense of conduct. But they created a type of life and manners, of which they themselves, indeed, are slow to recognize the faults, but which is fatally condemned by its hideousness, its immense ennui, and against which the instinct of self-preservation in humanity rebels.

Partisans fight against facts in vain. Mr. Goldwin Smith,[2] a writer of eloquence and power, although too prone to acerbity, is a partisan of the Puritans, and of the nonconformists who are the special inheritors of the Puritan tradition. He angrily resents the imputation upon that Puritan type of life, by which the life of our serious middle class has been formed, that it was doomed to hideousness, to immense ennui. He protests that it had beauty, amenity, accomplishment. Let us go to facts. Charles the First, who, with all his faults, had the just idea that art and letters are great civilizers, made, as you know, a famous collection of pictures, — our first National Gallery. It was, I suppose, the best collection at that time north of the

Alps. It contained nine Raphaels, eleven Correggios, twenty-eight Titians. What became of that collection? The journals of the House of Commons will tell you. There you may see the Puritan Parliament disposing of this Whitehall or York House collection as follows: 'Ordered, that all such pictures and statues there as are without any superstition, shall be forthwith sold. . . . Ordered, that all such pictures there as have the representation of the Second Person in the Trinity upon them, shall be forthwith burnt. Ordered, that all such pictures there as have the representation of the Virgin Mary upon them, shall be forthwith burnt." There we have the weak side of our parliamentary government and our serious middle class. We are incapable of sending Mr. Gladstone to be tried at the Old Bailey because he proclaims his antipathy to Lord Beaconsfield. A majority in our House of Commons is incapable of hailing, with frantic laughter and applause, a string of indecent jests against Christianity and its Founder. But we are not, or were not incapable of producing a Parliament which burns or sells the masterpieces of Italian art. And one may surely say of such a Puritan Parliament, and of those who determine its line for it, that they had not the spirit of beauty.

What shall we say of amenity? Milton was born a humanist, but the Puritan temper, as we know, mastered him. There is nothing more unlovely and unamiable than Milton the Puritan disputant. Some one answers his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. "I mean not," rejoins Milton, "to dispute philosophy with this pork, who never read any." However, he does reply to him, and throughout the reply Milton's great joke is, that his adversary, who was anonymous, is a serving-man. "Finally, he winds up

his text with much doubt and trepidation; for it may be his trenchers were not scraped, and that which never yet afforded corn of favor to his noddle — the salt-cellar — was not rubbed; and therefore, in this haste, easily granting that his answers fall foul upon each other, and praying you would not think he writes as a prophet, but as a man, he runs to the black jack, fills his flagon, spreads the table, and serves up dinner."[1] There you have the same spirit of urbanity and amenity, as much of it, and as little, as generally informs the religious controversies of our Puritan middle class to this day.

But Mr. Goldwin Smith[2] insists, and picks out his own exemplar of the Puritan type of life and manners; and even here let us follow him. He picks out the most favorable specimen he can find, — Colonel Hutchinson,[3] whose well-known memoirs, written by his widow, we have all read with interest. "Lucy Hutchinson," says Mr. Goldwin Smith, "is painting what she thought a perfect Puritan would be; and her picture presents to us not a coarse, crop-eared, and snuffling fanatic, but a highly accomplished, refined, gallant, and most amiable, though religious and seriously minded, gentleman." Let us, I say, in this example of Mr. Goldwin Smith's own choosing, lay our finger upon the points where this type deflects from the truly humane ideal.

Mrs. Hutchinson relates a story which gives us a good notion of what the amiable and accomplished social intercourse, even of a picked Puritan family, was. Her husband was governor of Nottingham. He had occasion, she said, "to go and break up a private meeting in the cannoneer's chamber"; and in the cannoneer's chamber "were found some notes concerning pædobaptism,[4] which, being brought into the

governor's lodgings, his wife having perused them and compared them with the Scriptures, found not what to say against the truths they asserted concerning the misapplication of that ordinance to infants." Soon afterwards she expects her confinement, and communicates the cannoneer's doubts about pædobaptism to her husband. The fatal cannoneer makes a breach in him too. "Then he bought and read all the eminent treatises on both sides, which at that time came thick from the presses, and still was cleared in the error of the pædobaptists." Finally, Mrs. Hutchinson is confined. Then the governor "invited all the ministers to dinner, and propounded his doubt and the ground thereof to them. None of them could defend their practice with any satisfactory reason, but the tradition of the Church from the primitive times, and their main buckler of federal holiness, which Tombs and Denne had excellently overthrown. He and his wife then, professing themselves unsatisfied, desired their opinions." With the opinions I will not trouble you, but hasten to the result: "Whereupon that infant was not baptised."

No doubt to a large division of English society at this very day, that sort of dinner and discussion, and indeed, the whole manner of life and conversation here suggested by Mrs. Hutchinson's narrative, will seem both natural and amiable, and such as to meet the needs of man as a religious and social creature. You know the conversation which reigns in thousands of middle-class families at this hour, about nunneries, teetotalism, the confessional, eternal punishment, ritualism, disestablishment. It goes wherever the class goes which is moulded on the Puritan type of life. In the long winter evenings of Toronto Mr. Goldwin Smith has had, probably, abundant experience of it. What is its enemy? The instinct of self-preservation

in humanity. Men make crude types and try to impose them, but to no purpose. "*L'homme s'agite, Dieu le mene*,"[1] says Bossuet. "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Eternal, that shall stand."[2] Those who offer us the Puritan type of life offer us a religion not true, the claims of intellect and knowledge not satisfied, the claim of beauty not satisfied, the claim of manners not satisfied. In its strong sense for conduct that life touches truth; but its other imperfections hinder it from employing even this sense aright. The type mastered our nation for a time. Then came the reaction. The nation said: "This type, at any rate, is amiss; we are not going to be all like *that!*" The type retired into our middle class, and fortified itself there. It seeks to endure, to emerge, to deny its own imperfections, to impose itself again; — impossible! If we continue to live, we must outgrow it. The very class in which it is rooted, our middle class, will have to acknowledge the type's inadequacy, will have to acknowledge the hideousness, the immense ennui of the life which this type has created, will have to transform itself thoroughly. It will have to admit the large part of truth which there is in the criticisms of our Frenchman, whom we have too long forgotten.

After our middle class he turns his attention to our lower class. And of the lower and larger portion of this, the portion not bordering on the middle class and sharing its faults, he says: "I consider this multitude to be absolutely devoid, not only of political principles, but even of the most simple notions of good and evil. Certainly it does not appeal, this mob, to the principles of '89, which you English make game of; it does not insist on the rights of man; what it wants is beer, gin, and *fun*."[3]

That is a description of what Mr. Bright[1] would call the residuum, only our author seems to think the residuum a very large body. And its condition strikes him with amazement and horror. And surely well it may. Let us recall Mr. Hamerton's account of the most illiterate class in France; what an amount of civilization they have notwithstanding! And this is always to be understood, in hearing or reading a Frenchman's praise of England. He envies our liberty, our public spirit, our trade, our stability. But there is always a reserve in his mind. He never means for a moment that he would like to change with us. Life seems to him so much better a thing in France for so many more people, that, in spite of the fearful troubles of France, it is best to be a Frenchman. A Frenchman might agree with Mr. Cobden,[2] that life is good in England for those people who have at least £5000 a year. But the civilization of that immense majority who have not £5000 a year, or £500, or even £100, — of our middle and lower class, — seems to him too deplorable.

And now what has this condition of our middle and lower class to tell us about equality? How is it, must we not ask, how is it that, being without fearful troubles, having so many achievements to show and so much success, having as a nation a deep sense for conduct, having signal energy and honesty, having a splendid aristocracy, having an exceptionally large class of gentlemen, we are yet so little civilized? How is it that our middle and lower classes, in spite of the individuals among them who are raised by happy gifts of nature to a more humane life, in spite of the seriousness of the middle class, in spite of the honesty and power of true work, the *virtus verusque labor*, which are to be found in abundance throughout the

lower, do yet present, as a whole, the characters which we have seen?

And really it seems as if the current of our discourse carried us of itself to but one conclusion. It seems as if we could not avoid concluding, that just as France owes her fearful troubles to other things and her civilizedness to equality, so we owe our immunity from fearful troubles to other things, and our uncivilizedness to inequality. "Knowledge is easy," says the wise man, "to him that understandeth";[1] easy, he means, to him who will use his mind simply and rationally, and not to make him think he can know what he cannot, or to maintain, *per fas et nefas*, a false thesis with which he fancies his interests to be bound up. And to him who will use his mind as the wise man recommends, surely it is easy to see that our shortcomings in civilization are due to our inequality; or, in other words, that the great inequality of classes and property, which came to us from the Middle Age and which we maintain because we have the religion of inequality, that this constitution of things, I say, has the natural and necessary effect, under present circumstances, of materializing our upper class, vulgarizing our middle class, and brutalizing our lower class.[2] And this is to fail in civilization.

For only just look how the facts combine themselves. I have said little as yet about our aristocratic class, except that it is splendid. Yet these, "our often very unhappy brethren," as Burke calls them, are by no means matter for nothing but ecstasy. Our charity ought certainly, Burke says, to "extend a due and anxious sensation of pity to the distresses of the miserable great." Burke's extremely strong language about their miseries and defects I will not quote. For my part, I am always disposed to marvel that human be-

ings, in a position so false, should be so good as these are. Their reason for existing was to serve as a number of centres in a world disintegrated after the ruin of the Roman Empire, and slowly re-constituting itself. Numerous centres of material force were needed, and these a feudal aristocracy supplied. Their large and hereditary estates served this public end. The owners had a positive function, for which their estates were essential. In our modern world the function is gone; and the great estates, with an infinitely multiplied power of ministering to mere pleasure and indulgence, remain. The energy and honesty of our race does not leave itself without witness in this class, and nowhere are there more conspicuous examples of individuals raised by happy gifts of nature far above their fellows and their circumstances. For distinction of all kinds this class has an esteem. Everything which succeeds they tend to welcome, to win over, to put on their side; genius may generally make, if it will, not bad terms for itself with them. But the total result of the class, its effect on society at large and on national progress, are what we must regard. And on the whole, with no necessary function to fulfil, never conversant with life as it really is, tempted, flattered, and spoiled from childhood to old age, our aristocratic class is inevitably materialized, and the more so the more the development of industry and ingenuity augments the means of luxury. Every one can see how bad is the action of such an aristocracy upon the class of newly enriched people, whose great danger is a materialistic ideal, just because it is the ideal they can easiest comprehend. Nor is the mischief of this action now compensated by signal services of a public kind. Turn even to that sphere which aristocracies think specially their own, and where they have under other circum-

stances been really effective, — the sphere of politics. When there is need, as now, for any large forecast of the course of human affairs, for an acquaintance with the ideas which in the end sway mankind, and for an estimate of their power, aristocracies are out of their element, and materialized aristocracies most of all. In the immense spiritual movement of our day, the English aristocracy, as I have elsewhere said, always reminds me of Pilate confronting the phenomenon of Christianity. Nor can a materialized class have any serious and fruitful sense for the power of beauty. They may imagine themselves to be in pursuit of beauty ; but how often, alas, does the pursuit come to little more than dabbling a little in what they are pleased to call art, and making a great deal of what they are pleased to call love !

Let us return to their merits. For the power of manners an aristocratic class, whether materialized or not, will always, from its circumstances, have a strong sense. And although for this power of social life and manners, so important to civilization, our English race has no special natural turn, in our aristocracy this power emerges and marks them. When the day of general humanization comes, they will have fixed the standard of manners. The English simplicity, too, makes the best of the English aristocracy more frank and natural than the best of the like class anywhere else, and even the worst of them it makes free from the incredible fatuities and absurdities of the worst. Then the sense of conduct they share with their countrymen at large. In no class has it such trials to undergo ; in none is it more often and more grievously overborne. But really the right comment on this is the comment of Pepys[1] upon the evil courses of Charles the Second and the Duke of York and the

court of that day: "At all which I am sorry; but it is the effect of idleness, and having nothing else to employ their great spirits upon."

Heaven forbid that I should speak in dispraise of that unique and most English class which Mr. Charles Sumner extols — the large class of gentlemen, not of the landed class or of the nobility, but cultivated and refined. They are a seemly product of the energy and of the power to rise in our race. Without, in general, rank and splendor and wealth and luxury to polish them, they have made their own the high standard of life and manners of an aristocratic and refined class. Not having all the dissipations and distractions of this class, they are much more seriously alive to the power of intellect and knowledge, to the power of beauty. The sense of conduct, too, meets with fewer trials in this class. To some extent, however, their contiguousness to the aristocratic class has now the effect of materializing them, as it does the class of newly enriched people. The most palpable action is on the young amongst them, and on their standard of life and enjoyment. But in general, for this whole class, established facts, the materialism which they see regnant, too much block their mental horizon, and limit the possibilities of things to them. They are deficient in openness and flexibility of mind, in free play of ideas, in faith and ardor. Civilized they are, but they are not much of a civilizing force; they are somehow bounded and ineffective.

So on the middle class they produce singularly little effect. What the middle class sees is that splendid piece of materialism, the aristocratic class, with a wealth and luxury utterly out of their reach, with a standard of social life and manners, the offspring of that wealth and luxury, seeming utterly out of their

reach also. And thus they are thrown back upon themselves — upon a defective type of religion, a narrow range of intellect and knowledge, a stunted sense of beauty, a low standard of manners. And the lower class see before them the aristocratic class, and its civilization, such as it is, even infinitely more out of *their* reach than out of that of the middle class; while the life of the middle class, with its unlovely types of religion, thought, beauty, and manners, has naturally, in general, no great attractions for them either. And so they, too, are thrown back upon themselves; upon their beer, their gin, and their *fun*. Now, then, you will understand what I meant by saying that our inequality materializes our upper class, vulgarizes our middle class, brutalizes our lower.

And the greater the inequality the more marked is its bad action upon the middle and lower classes. In Scotland the landed aristocracy fills the scene, as is well known, still more than in England; the other classes are more squeezed back and effaced. And the social civilization of the lower middle class and of the poorest class, in Scotland, is an example of the consequences. Compared with the same class even in England, the Scottish lower middle class is most visibly, to vary Mr. Charles Sumner's phrase, *less* well-bred, *less* careful in personal habits and in social conventions, *less* refined. Let any one who doubts it go, after issuing from the aristocratic solitudes which possess Loch Lomond, let him go and observe the shopkeepers and the middle class in Dumbarton, and Greenock, and Gourock, and the places along the mouth of the Clyde. And for the poorest class, who that has seen it can ever forget the hardly human horror, the abjection and uncivilizedness of Glasgow?

What a strange religion, then, is our religion of

inequality! Romance often helps a religion to hold its ground, and romance is good in its way; but ours is not even a romantic religion. No doubt our aristocracy is an object of very strong public interest. The *Times* itself bestows a leading article by way of epithalamium on the Duke of Norfolk's marriage. And those journals of a new type, full of talent, and which interest me particularly because they seem as if they were written by the young lion[1] of our youth, — the young lion grown mellow and, as the French say, *viveur*, arrived at his full and ripe knowledge of the world, and minded to enjoy the smooth evening of his days, — those journals, in the main a sort of social gazette of the aristocracy, are apparently not read by that class only which they most concern, but are read with great avidity by other classes also. And the common people, too, have undoubtedly, as Mr. Gladstone says, a wonderful preference for a lord. Yet our aristocracy, from the action upon it of the Wars of the Roses, the Tudors, and the political necessities of George the Third, is for the imagination a singularly modern and uninteresting one. Its splendor of station, its wealth, show, and luxury, is then what the other classes really admire in it; and this is not an elevating admiration. Such an admiration will never lift us out of our vulgarity and brutality, if we chance to be vulgar and brutal to start with; it will rather feed them and be fed by them. So that when Mr. Gladstone invites us to call our love of inequality "the complement of the love of freedom or its negative pole, or the shadow which the love of freedom casts, or the reverberation of its voice in the halls of the constitution," we must surely answer that all this mystical eloquence is not in the least necessary to explain so simple a matter; that our love of inequality is really the vulgarity in

us, and the brutality, admiring and worshipping the splendid materiality.

Our present social organization, however, will and must endure until our middle class is provided with some better ideal of life than it has now. Our present organization has been an appointed stage in our growth; it has been of good use, and has enabled us to do great things. But the use is at an end, and the stage is over. Ask yourselves if you do not sometimes feel in yourselves a sense, that in spite of the strenuous efforts for good of so many excellent persons amongst us, we begin somehow to flounder and to beat the air; that we seem to be finding ourselves stopped on this line of advance and on that, and to be threatened with a sort of standstill. It is that we are trying to live on with a social organization of which the day is over. Certainly equality will never of itself alone give us a perfect civilization. But, with such inequality as ours, a perfect civilization is impossible.

To that conclusion, facts, and the stream itself of this discourse, do seem, I think, to carry us irresistibly. We arrive at it because they so choose, not because we so choose. Our tendencies are all the other way. We are all of us politicians, and in one of two camps, the Liberal or the Conservative. Liberals tend to accept the middle class as it is, and to praise the nonconformists; while Conservatives tend to accept the upper class as it is, and to praise the aristocracy. And yet here we are at the conclusion, that whereas one of the great obstacles to our civilization is, as I have often said, British nonconformity, another main obstacle to our civilization is British aristocracy! And this while we are yet forced to recognize excellent special qualities as well as the general English energy and honesty, and a number of emergent humane indi-

viduals, in both nonconformists and aristocracy. Clearly such a conclusion can be none of our own seeking.

Then again, to remedy our inequality, there must be a change in the law of bequest, as there has been in France; and the faults and inconveniences of the present French law of bequest are obvious. It tends to over-divide property; it is unequal in operation, and can be eluded by people limiting their families; it makes the children, however ill they may behave, independent of the parent. To be sure, Mr. Mill[1] and others have shown that a law of bequest fixing the maximum, whether of land or money, which any one individual may take by bequest or inheritance, but in other respects leaving the testator quite free, has none of the inconveniences of the French law, and is in every way preferable. But evidently these are not questions of practical politics. Just imagine Lord Hartington[2] going down to Glasgow, and meeting his Scotch Liberals there, and saying to them: "You are ill at ease, and you are calling for change, and very justly. But the cause of your being ill at ease is not what you suppose. The cause of your being ill at ease is the profound imperfectness of your social civilization. Your social civilization is, indeed, such as I forbear to characterize. But the remedy is not disestablishment. The remedy is social equality. Let me direct your attention to a reform in the law of bequest and entail." One can hardly speak of such a thing without laughing. No, the matter is at present one for the thoughts of those who think. It is a thing to be turned over in the minds of those who, on the one hand, have the spirit of scientific inquirers, bent on seeing things as they really are; and, on the other hand, the spirit of friends of the humane life, lovers of perfection. To

your thoughts I commit it. And perhaps, the more you think of it, the more you will be persuaded that Menander[1] showed his wisdom quite as much when he said *Choose equality*, as when he assured us that *Evil communications corrupt good manners.*

NOTES

POETRY AND THE CLASSICS

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1 1. **Poetry and the Classics.** Published as Preface to *Poems:* 1853 (dated Fox How, Ambleside, October 1, 1853). It was reprinted in *Irish Essays*, 1882.

2. **the poem.** *Empedocles on Etna.*

3. **the Sophists.** "A name given by the Greeks about the middle of the fifth century B.C. to certain teachers of a superior grade who, distinguishing themselves from philosophers on the one hand and from artists and craftsmen on the other, claimed to prepare their pupils, not for any particular study or profession, but for civic life." *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

2 1. *Poetics*, 4.

2. *Theognis*, ll. 54–56.

4 1. **"The poet," it is said.** In the *Spectator* of April 2, 1853. The words quoted were not used with reference to poems of mine. [Arnold.]

5 1. **Dido.** See the *Iliad*, the *Oresteia* (*Agamemnon, Choëphoræ*, and *Eumenides*) of Æschylus, and the *Æneid*.

2. **Hermann and Dorothea, Childe Harold, Jocelyn, the Excursion.** Long narrative poems by Goethe, Byron, Lamartine, and Wordsworth.

6 1. **Œdipus.** See the *Œdipus Tyrannus* and *Œdipus Coloneus* of Sophocles.

7 1. **grand style.** Arnold, while admitting that the term **grand style**, which he repeatedly uses, is incapable of exact verbal definition, describes it most adequately in the essay *On Translating Homer:* "I think it will be found that the grand style arises in poetry when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with severity a serious subject." See *On the Study of Celtic Literature and on Translating Homer*, ed. 1895, pp. 264–69.

2. **Orestes, or Merope, or Alcmæon.** The story of **Orestes** was dramatized by Æschylus, by Sophocles, and by Euripides. **Merope** was the subject of a lost tragedy by Euripides and of several modern plays, including one by Matthew Arnold himself. The story of **Alcmæon** was the subject of several tragedies which have not been preserved.

8 1. **Polybius.** A Greek historian (*c.* 204–122 B.C.).

9 1. **Menander.** See *Contribution of the Celts, Selections*, Note 3, p. 177.

12 1. **rien à dire.** He says all that he wishes to, but unfortunately he has nothing to say.

13 1. Boccaccio's *Decameron*, 4th day, 5th novel.

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2. **Henry Hallam** (1777–1859). English historian. See his *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, chap. 23, §§ 51, 52.

14 1. **François Pierre Guillaume Guizot** (1787–1874), historian, orator, and statesman of France.

16 1. **Pittacus**, of Mytilene in Lesbos (*c.* 650–569 B.C.), was one of the Seven Sages of Greece. His favorite sayings were: "It is hard to be excellent" (χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι), and "Know when to act."

17 1. **Barthold Georg Niebuhr** (1776–1831) was a German statesman and historian. His *Roman History* (1827–32) is an epoch-making work. For his opinion of his age see his *Life and Letters*, London, 1852, II, 396.

18 1. *Æneid*, XII, 894–95.

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM AT THE PRESENT TIME

20 1. Reprinted from *The National Review*, November, 1864, in the *Essays in Criticism*, Macmillan & Co., 1865.

2. In *On Translating Homer*, ed. 1903, pp. 216–17.

3. An essay called *Wordsworth: The Man and the Poet*, published in *The North British Review* for August, 1864, vol. 41. **John Campbell Shairp** (1819–85), Scottish critic and man of letters, was professor of poetry at Oxford from 1877 to 1884. The best of his lectures from this chair were published in 1881 as *Aspects of Poetry*.

4. I cannot help thinking that a practice, common in England during the last century, and still followed in France, of printing a notice of this kind, — a notice by a competent critic, — to serve as an introduction to an eminent author's works, might be revived among us with advantage. To introduce all succeeding editions of Wordsworth, Mr. Shairp's notice might, it seems to me, excellently serve; it is written from the point of view of an admirer, nay, of a disciple, and that is right; but then the disciple must be also, as in this case he is, a critic, a man of letters, not, as too often happens, some relation or friend with no qualification for his task except affection for his author. [Arnold.]

5. See *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, ed. 1851, II, 151, letter to Bernard Barton.

21 1. **Irene.** An unsuccessful play of Dr. Johnson's.

22 1. **Preface.** Prefixed to the second edition (1800) of the *Lyrical Ballads*.

28 1. **The old woman.** At the first attempt to read the newly prescribed liturgy in St. Giles's Church, Edinburgh, on July 23, 1637, a riot took place, in which the "fauld-stools," or folding stools, of the congregation were hurled as missiles. An untrustworthy tradition attributes the flinging of the first stool to a certain Jenny or Janet Geddes.

29 1. *Pensées de J. Joubert*, ed. 1850, I, 355, titre 15, 2.

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30 1. **French Revolution.** The latter part of Burke's life was largely devoted to a conflict with the upholders of the French Revolution. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790, and *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, 1796, are his most famous writings in this cause.

31 1. **Richard Price, D.D.** (1723–91), was strongly opposed to the war with America and in sympathy with the French revolutionists.

2. From Goldsmith's epitaph on Burke in the *Retaliation*.

32 1. Num. XXII, 35.

2. **William Eden, First Baron Auckland** (1745–1814), English statesman. Among other services he represented English interests in Holland during the critical years 1790–93.

35 1. **Revue des deux Mondes.** The best-known of the French magazines devoted to literature, art, and general criticism, founded in Paris in 1831 by François Buloz.

36 1. **Home and Foreign Review.** Published in London 1862–64.

37 1. **Charles Bowyer Adderley, First Baron Norton** (1814–1905), English politician, inherited valuable estates in Warwickshire. He was a strong churchman and especially interested in education and the colonies.

2. **John Arthur Roebuck** (1801–79), a leading radical and utilitarian reformer, conspicuous for his eloquence, honesty, and strong hostility to the government of his day. He held a seat for Sheffield from 1849 until his death.

38 1 From Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, I, ii, 91–92.

40 1. **detachment.** In the Buddhistic religion salvation is found through an emancipation from the craving for the gratification of the senses, for a future life, and for prosperity.

42 1. **John Somers, Baron Somers** (1651–1716), was the most trusted minister of William III, and a stanch supporter of the English Constitution. See Addison, *The Freeholder*, May 14, 1716, and Macauley's *History*, IV, 53.

2. **William Cobbett** (1762–1835). English politician and writer. As a pamphleteer his reputation was injured by his pugnacity, self-esteem, and virulence of language. See *Heine, Selections*, p. 120, and *The Contribution of the Celts, Selections*, p. 179.

3. **Carlyle's** *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850) contain much violent denunciation of the society of his day.

4. **Ruskin** turned to political economy about 1860. In 1862, he published *Unto this Last*, followed by other works of similar nature.

5. **terrae filii.** Sons of Mother Earth; hence, obscure, mean persons.

6. See *Heine, Selections*, Note 2, p. 117.

43 1. **To think is so hard.** Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Book VII, chap. IX.

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2. See Sénancour's *Obermann*, letter 90. Arnold was much influenced by this remarkable book. For an account of the author (1770–1846) and the book see Arnold's *Stanzas in Memory of the Author of "Obermann,"* with note on the poem, and the essay on **Obermann** in *Essays in Criticism*, third series.

3. So sincere is my dislike to all personal attack and controversy, that I abstain from reprinting, at this distance of time from the occasion which called them forth, the essays in which I criticized Dr. Colenso's book; I feel bound, however, after all that has passed, to make here a final declaration of my sincere impenitence for having published them. Nay, I cannot forbear repeating yet once more, for his benefit and that of his readers, this sentence from my original remarks upon him; *There is truth of science and truth of religion; truth of science does not become truth of religion till it is made religious.* And I will add: Let us have all the science there is from the men of science; from the men of religion let us have religion. [Arnold.]

John William Colenso (1814–83), Bishop of Natal, published a series of treatises on the *Pentateuch*, extending from 1862–1879, opposing the traditional views about the literal inspiration of the Scriptures and the actual historical character of the Mosaic story. Arnold's censorious criticism of the first volume of this work is entitled *The Bishop and the Philosopher* (*Macmillan's Magazine*, January, 1863). As an example of the Bishop's cheap "arithmetical demonstrations" he describes him as presenting the case of Leviticus as follows: "'*If three priests have to eat* 264 *pigeons a day, how many must each priest eat?*' That disposes of Leviticus." The essay is devoted chiefly to contrasting Bishop Colenso's unedifying methods with those of the philosopher Spinoza. In passing, Arnold refers also to Dr. Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine* (1856), quotations from which are characterized as "the refreshing spots" in the Bishop's volume.

4. It has been said I make it "a crime against literary criticism and the higher culture to attempt to inform the ignorant." Need I point out that the ignorant are not informed by being confirmed in a confusion? [Arnold.]

44 1. Joubert's *Pensées*, ed. 1850, II, 102, titre 23, 54.

2. **Arthur Penrhyn Stanley** (1815–81), Dean of Westminster. He was the author of a *Life of* (Thomas) *Arnold*, 1844. In university politics and in religious discussions he was a Liberal and the advocate of toleration and comprehension.

3. **Frances Power Cobbe** (1822–1904), a prominent English philanthropist and woman of letters. The quotation below is from *Broken Lights* (1864), p. 134. Her *Religious Duty* (1857), referred to on p. 46, is a book of religious and ethical instruction written from the Unitarian point of view.

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4. **Ernest Renan** (1823–92), French philosopher and Orientalist. The *Vie de Jésus* (1863), here referred to, was begun in Syria and is filled with the atmosphere of the East, but is a work of literary rather than of scholarly importance.

45 1. **David Friedrich Strauss** (1808–74), German theologian and man of letters. The work referred to is the *Leben Jesu*, 1835. A popular edition was published in 1864.

2. From " Fleury (Preface) on the Gospel." — Arnold's *Note Book*.

46 1. Cicero's *Att.* 16. 7. 3.

2. **Coleridge's happy phrase.** Coleridge's *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, letter 2.

49 1. **Luther's theory of grace.** The question concerning the " means of grace," i.e. whether the efficacy of the sacraments as channels of the divine grace is *ex opere operato*, or dependent on the faith of the recipient, was the chief subject of controversy between Catholics and Protestants during the period of the Reformation.

2. **Jacques Bénigne Bossuet** (1627–1704), French divine, orator, and writer. His *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (1681) was an attempt to provide ecclesiastical authority with a rational basis. It is dominated by the conviction that " the establishment of Christianity was the one point of real importance in the whole history of the world."

50 1. From Virgil's *Eclogues*, IV, 5. Translated in Shelley's *Hellas:* "The world's great age begins anew."

THE STUDY OF POETRY

55 1. Published in 1880 as the General Introduction to *The English Poets*, edited by T. H. Ward. Reprinted in *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series, Macmillan & Co., 1888.

2. This quotation is taken, slightly condensed, from the closing paragraph of a short introduction contributed by Arnold to *The Hundred Greatest Men*, Sampson, Low & Co., London, 1885.

56 1. From the Preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800.

2. **Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve** (1804–69), French critic, was looked upon by Arnold as in certain respects his master in the art of criticism.

57 1. **a criticism of life.** This celebrated phrase was first used by Arnold in the essay on *Joubert* (1864), though the theory is implied in *On Translating Homer*, 1861. In *Joubert* it is applied to literature: " The end and aim of all literature, if one considers it attentively, is, in truth, nothing but that." It was much attacked, especially as applied to poetry, and is defended as so applied in the essay on *Byron* (1881). See also *Wordsworth*, *Selections*, p. 230.

2. Compare Arnold's definition of the function of criticism, *Selections*, p. 52.

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59 1. **Paul Pellisson** (1624–93). French author, friend of Mlle. Scudéry, and historiographer to the king.

2. Barren and servile civility.

3. **M. Charles d'Hericault** was joint editor of the Jannet edition (1868–72) of the poems of **Clément Marot** (1496–1544).

62 1. *Imitation of Christ*, Book III, chap. 43, 2.

2. **Cædmon.** The first important religious poet in Old English literature. Died about 680 A.D.

3. **Ludovic Vitet** (1802–73). French dramatist and politician.

4. **Chanson de Roland.** The greatest of the *Chansons des Gestes*, long narrative poems dealing with warfare and adventure, popular in France during the Middle Ages. It was composed in the eleventh century. **Taillefer** was the surname of a bard and warrior of the eleventh century. The tradition concerning him is related by Wace, *Roman de Rou*, third part, v., 8035–62, ed. Andreson, Heilbronn, 1879. The Bodleian *Roland* ends with the words: " ci folt la geste, que Turoldus declinet." Turold has not been identified.

63 1. " Then began he to call many things to remembrance, — all the lands which his valor conquered, and pleasant France, and the men of his lineage, and Charlemagne his liege lord who nourished him." — *Chanson de Roland*, III, 939–42. [Arnold.]

2. " So said she; they long since in Earth's soft arms were reposing,
There, in their own dear land, their fatherland, Lacedæmon."
Iliad, III, 243, 244 (translated by Dr. Hawtrey). [Arnold.]

64 1. " Ah, unhappy pair, why gave we you to King Peleus, to a mortal? but ye are without old age, and immortal. Was it that with men born to misery ye might have sorrow?" — *Iliad*, XVII, 443–445. [Arnold.]

2. " Nay, and thou too, old man, in former days wast, as we hear, happy." — *Iliad*, XXIV, 543. [Arnold.]

3. " I wailed not, so of stone grew I within; — *they* wailed." — *Inferno*, XXXIII, 39, 40. [Arnold.]

4. " Of such sort hath God, thanked be His mercy, made me, that your misery toucheth me not, neither doth the flame of this fire strike me." — *Inferno*, II, 91–93. [Arnold.]

5. " In His will is our peace." — *Paradiso*, III, 85. [Arnold.]

6. *Henry IV*, part 2, III, i, 18–20.

65 1. *Hamlet*, v, ii, 361–62.

2. *Paradise Lost*, I, 599–602.

3. *Ibid.*, I, 108–9.

4. *Ibid.*, IV, 271.

66 1. *Poetics*, § 9.

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67 1. **Provençal,** the language of southern France, from the southern French *oc* instead of the northern *oïl* for "yes."

68 1. Dante acknowledges his debt to **Latini** (*c.* 1230–*c.* 1294), but the latter was probably not his tutor. He is the author of the *Tesoretto*, a heptasyllabic Italian poem, and the prose *Livres dou Trêsor*, a sort of encyclopedia of medieval lore, written in French because that language " is more delightful and more widely known."

2. **Christian of Troyes.** A French poet of the second half of the twelfth century, author of numerous narrative poems dealing with legends of the Round Table. The present quotation is from the *Cligés*, ll. 30–39.

69 1. Chaucer's two favorite stanzas, the seven-line and eight-line stanzas in heroic verse, were imitated from Old French poetry. See B. ten Brink's *The Language and Meter of Chaucer*, 1901, pp. 353–57.

2. **Wolfram von Eschenbach.** A medieval German poet, born in the end of the twelfth century. His best-known poem is the epic *Parzival*.

70 1. From Dryden's *Preface to the Fables*, 1700.

2. The *Confessio Amantis*, the single English poem of **John Gower** (*c.* 1330–1408), was in existence in 1392–93.

71 1. **souded.** The French *soudé*, soldered, fixed fast. [Arnold.] From the *Prioress's Tale*, ed. Skeat, 1894, B. 1769. The line should read, " O martir, souded to virginitee."

73 1. **François Villon,** born in or near Paris in 1431, thief and poet. His best-known poems are his *ballades*. See R. L. Stevenson's essay.

2. The name *Heaulmière* is said to be derived from a headdress (helm) worn as a mark by courtesans. In Villon's ballad, a poor old creature of this class laments her days of youth and beauty. The last stanza of the ballad runs thus:

> " Ainsi le bon temps regretons
> Entre nous, pauvres vieilles sottes,
> Assises bas, à croppetons,
> Tout en ung tas comme pelottes;
> A petit feu de chenevottes
> Tost allumées, tost estainctes.
> Et jadis fusmes si mignottes!
> Ainsi en prend à maintz et maintes."

" Thus amongst ourselves we regret the good time, poor silly old things, low-seated on our heels, all in a heap like so many balls; by a little fire of hemp-stalks, soon lighted, soon spent. And once we were such darlings! So fares it with many and many a one." [Arnold.]

74 1. From *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 1688.

2. A statement to this effect is made by Dryden in the *Preface to the Fables*.

3. From *Preface to the Fables*.

75 1. See Wordsworth's *Essay, Supplementary to the Preface*, 1815, and Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*.

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2. *An Apology for Smectymnuus*, Prose Works, ed. 1843, III, 117–18. Milton was thirty-four years old at this time.

76 1. The opening words of Dryden's *Postscript to the Reader* in the translation of *Virgil*, 1697.

77 1. The opening lines of *The Hind and the Panther*.

2. *Imitations of Horace*, Book II, Satire 2, ll. 143–44.

78 1. From *On the Death of Robert Dundas, Esq.*

79 1. **Clarinda.** A name assumed by Mrs. Maclehose in her sentimental connection with Burns, who corresponded with her under the name of **Sylvander.**

2. Burns to Mr. Thomson, October 19, 1794.

80 1. From *The Holy Fair*.

81 1. From *Epistle: To a Young Friend*.

2. From *Address to the Unco' Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous*.

3. From *Epistle: To Dr. Blacklock*.

4. See his *Memorabilia*.

83 1. From *Winter: A Dirge*.

84 1. From Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, III, iv, last line.

2. *Ibid.*, II, v.

LITERATURE AND SCIENCE

87 1. Reprinted (considerably revised) from the *Nineteenth Century*, August, 1882, vol. XII, in *Discourses in America*, Macmillan & Co., 1885. It was the most popular of the three lectures given by Arnold during his visit to America in 1883–84.

2. Plato's *Republic*, 6. 495, *Dialogues*, ed. Jowett, 1875, vol. 3, p. 194.

3. **working lawyer.** Plato's *Theætetus*, 172–73, *Dialogues*, IV, 231.

88 1. **majesty.** All editions read "majority." What Emerson said was "majesty," which is therefore substituted here. See Emerson's *Literary Ethics*, *Works*, Centenary ed., I, 179.

89 1. "His whole soul is perfected and ennobled by the acquirement of justice and temperance and wisdom. . . . And in the first place, he will honor studies which impress these qualities on his soul and will disregard others." — *Republic*, IX, 591, *Dialogues*, III, 305.

91 1. See *The Function of Criticism*, *Selections*, p. 52.

2. Delivered October 1, 1880, and printed in *Science and Culture and Other Essays*, Macmillan & Co., 1881.

3. See *The Function of Criticism*, *Selections*, pp. 52–53.

92 1. See *L'Instruction supérieur en France* in Renan's *Questions Contemporaines*, Paris, 1868.

93 1. **Friedrich August Wolf** (1759–1824), German philologist and critic.

99 1. See Plato's *Symposium*, *Dialogues*, II, 52–63.

100 1. **James Joseph Sylvester** (1814–97), English mathematician. In 1883, the year of Arnold's lecture, he resigned a

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position as teacher in Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, to accept the Savilian Chair of Geometry at Oxford.

101 1. **Darwin's famous proposition.** *Descent of Man*, Part III, chap. XXI, ed. 1888, II, 424.

103 1. **Michael Faraday** (1791–1867), English chemist and physicist, and the discoverer of the induction of electrical currents. He belonged to the very small Christian sect called after **Robert Sandeman,** and his opinion with respect to the relation between his science and his religion is expressed in a lecture on mental education printed at the end of his *Researches in Chemistry and Physics*.

105 1. Eccles. VIII, 17. [Arnold.]
2. *Iliad*, XXIV, 49. [Arnold.]
3. Luke IX, 25.

107 1. *Macbeth*, V, iii.

109 1. A touching account of the devotion of **Lady Jane Grey** (1537–54) to her studies is to be found in Ascham's *Scholemaster*, Arber's ed., 46–47.

HEINRICH HEINE.

112 1. Reprinted from the *Cornhill Magazine*, vol. VIII, August, 1863, in *Essays in Criticism*, 1st series, 1865.
2. Written from Paris, March 30, 1855. See Heine's *Memoirs*, ed. 1910, II, 270.

113 1. The German Romantic school of **Tieck** (1773–1853), **Novalis** (1772–1801), and **Richter** (1763–1825) followed the classical school of Schiller and Goethe. It was characterized by a return to individualism, subjectivity, and the supernatural. Carlyle translated extracts from Tieck and Richter in his *German Romance* (1827), and his *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* contain essays on Richter and Novalis.

114 1. From *English Fragments; Conclusion*, in *Pictures of Travel*, ed. 1891, Leland's translation, *Works*, III, 466–67.

117 1. **Heine's** birthplace was not **Hamburg,** but **Düsseldorf.**
2. **Philistinism.** In German university slang the term *Philister* was applied to townsmen by students, and corresponded to the English university "snob." Hence it came to mean a person devoid of culture and enlightenment, and is used in this sense by Goethe in 1773. Heine was especially instrumental in popularizing the expression outside of Germany. Carlyle first introduced it into English literature in 1827. In a note to the discussion of Goethe in the second edition of *German Romance*, he speaks of a Philistine as one who " judged of Brunswick mum, by its *utility*." He adds: "Stray specimens of the Philistine nation are said to exist in our own Islands; but we have no name for them like the Germans." The term occurs also in Carlyle's essays on *The State of German Literature*, 1827, and *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, 1831. Arnold, however, has done most to establish the word in English usage. He applies it especially to

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members of the middle class who are swayed chiefly by material interests and are blind to the force of ideas and the value of culture. Leslie Stephen, who is always ready to plead the cause of the Philistine, remarks: "As a clergyman always calls every one from whom he differs an atheist, and a bargee has one or two favorite but unmentionable expressions for the same purpose, so a prig always calls his adversary a Philistine." *Mr. Matthew Arnold and the Church of England, Fraser's Magazine*, October, 1870.

3. The word **solecism** is derived from Σόλοι, in Cilicia, owing to the corruption of the Attic dialect among the Athenian colonists of that place.

118 1. The " **gig** " as Carlyle's symbol of philistinism takes its origin from a dialogue which took place in Thurtell's trial: "I always thought him a respectable man." " What do you mean by 'respectable'? " " He kept a gig." From this he coins the words " gigman," " gigmanity," " gigmania," which are of frequent occurrence in his writings.

119 1. *English Fragments, Pictures of Travel, Works*, III, 464.

120 1. See *The Function of Criticism, Selections*, Note 2, p. 42.

121 1. *English Fragments*, chap. IX, in *Pictures of Travel, Works*, III, 410–11.

2. Adapted from a line in Wordsworth's *Resolution and Independence*.

122 1. **Charles the Fifth.** Ruler of The Holy Roman Empire, 1500–58.

124 1. *English Fragments, Conclusion*, in *Pictures of Travel, Works*, III, 468–70.

2. A complete edition has at last appeared in Germany. [Arnold.]

125 1. **Augustin Eugène Scribe** (1791–1861), French dramatist, for fifty years the best exponent of the ideas of the French middle class.

126 1. **Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte** (Napoleon III), 1808–73, son of Louis Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon I, by the *coup d'état* of December, 1851, became Emperor of France. This was accomplished against the resistance of the Moderate Republicans, partly through the favor of his democratic theories with the mass of the French people. Heine was mistaken, however, in believing that the rule of Louis Napoleon had prepared the way for Communism. An attempt to bring about a Communistic revolution was easily crushed in 1871.

127 1. **J. J. von Goerres** (1776–1848), **Klemens Brentano** (1778–1842), and **Ludwig Achim von Arnim** (1781–1831) were the leaders of the second German Romantic school and constitute the Heidelberg group of writers. They were much interested in the German past, and strengthened the national and patriotic spirit. Their work, however, is often marred by exaggeration and affectation.

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128 1. From *The Baths of Lucca*, chap. x, in *Pictures of Travel*, *Works*, III, 199.

129 1. Cf. *Function of Criticism*, *Selections*, p. 26.

2. Job XII, 23: "He enlargeth the nations and straiteneth them again."

131 1. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, book I, 135: "he stands the shadow of a great name."

132 1. From *Ideas*, in *Pictures of Travel*, *Works*, II, 312–13.

2. **Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh** (1769–1822), as Foreign Secretary under Lord Liverpool, became the soul of the coalition against Napoleon, which, during the campaigns of 1813–14, was kept together by him alone. He committed suicide with a penknife in a fit of insanity in August, 1822.

3. From *Ideas*, in *Pictures of Travel*, *Works*, II, 324.

4. From *English Fragments*, 1828, in *Pictures of Travel*, *Works*, III, 340–42.

133 1. Song in *Measure for Measure*, IV, i.

2. From *The Dying One:* for translation see p. 142.

135 1. From *Mountain Idyll*, *Travels in the Hartz Mountains*, *Book of Songs*. *Works*, ed. 1904, pp. 219–21.

2. Published 1851.

3. **Rhampsinitus.** A Greek corruption of *Ra-messu-paneter*, the popular name of Rameses III, King of Egypt.

4. **Edith with the Swan Neck.** A mistress of King Harold of England.

5. **Melisanda of Tripoli.** Mistress of Geoffrey Rudel, the troubadour.

6. **Pedro the Cruel.** King of Castile (1334–69).

7. **Firdusi.** A Persian poet, author of the epic poem, the *Shāhnāma*, or "Book of Kings," a complete history of Persia in nearly sixty thousand verses.

8. **Dr. Döllinger.** A German theologian and church historian (1799–1890).

9. *Spanish Atrides*, *Romancero*, *Works*, ed. 1905, pp. 200–04).

10. **Henry of Trastamare.** King of Castile (1369–79).

137 1. **garbanzos.** A kind of pulse much esteemed in Spain.

138 1. Adapted from Rom. VIII, 26.

139 1. From *The Baths of Lucca*, chap. IX, in *Pictures of Travel*, *Works*, III, 184–85.

2. *Romancero*, book III.

140 1. **Laura.** The heroine of Petrarch's famous series of love lyrics known as the *Canzoniere*.

2. **Court of Love.** For a discussion of this supposed medieval tribunal see William A. Neilson's *The Origins and Sources of the Court of Love*, *Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, Boston, 1899, chap. VIII.

142 1. *Disputation*, *Romancero*, book III.

2. *The Dying One*, *Romancero*, book II, quoted entire.

143 1. Written from Paris, September 30, 1850. See *Memoirs*, ed. 1910, II, 226–27.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

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145 1. Reprinted from *The Victoria Magazine*, II, 1–9, November, 1863, in *Essays in Criticism*, 1865.

2. **John Stuart Mill** (1806–73), English philosopher and economist. *On Liberty* (1859) is his most finished writing.

3. The *Imitation of Christ* (*Imitatio Christi*), a famous medieval Christian devotional work, is usually ascribed to Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471), an Augustinian canon of Mont St. Agnes in the diocese of Utrecht.

146 1. **Epictetus.** Greek Stoic philosopher (born *c.* A.D. 60). He is an earnest preacher of righteousness and his philosophy is eminently practical. For Arnold's personal debt to him see his sonnet *To a Friend*.

147 1. **Empedocles.** A Greek philosopher and statesman (*c.* 490–430 B.C.). He is the subject of Arnold's early poetical drama, *Empedocles on Etna*, which he later suppressed for reasons which he states in the Preface to the *Poems* of 1853. See *Selections*, pp. 1–3.

2. *Encheiridion*, chap. LII.

3. Ps. CXLIII, 10; incorrectly quoted.

4. Is. LX, 19.

5. Mal. IV, 2.

6. John I, 13.

7. John III, 5.

148 1. I John v, 4.

2. Matt. XIX, 26.

3. 2 Cor. v, 17.

4. *Encheiridion*, chap. XLIII.

5. Matt. XVIII, 22.

6. Matt. XXII, 37–39, etc.

149 1 **George Long** (1800–79), classical scholar. He published *Selections from Plutarch's Lives*, 1862; *Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*, 1862; etc.

2. **Thomas Arnold** (1795–1842), English clergyman and headmaster of Rugby School, father of Matthew Arnold.

150 1. **Jeremy Collier** (1650–1726). His best-known work is his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, 1698, a sharp and efficacious attack on the Post-Restoration drama. *The Emperor M. Aurelius Antoninus, his Conversation with himself*, appeared in 1701.

151 1. *Meditations*, III, 14.

152 1. **Antoninus Pius.** Roman Emperor, A.D. 138–161, and foster-father of M. Aurelius.

2. To become current in men's speech.

3. The real name of **Voltaire** was **François Marie Arouet.** The name Voltaire was assumed in 1718 and is supposed to be an anagram of Arouet le j(eune).

154 1. See *Function of Criticism*, *Selections*, p. 36.

2. **Louis IX of France** (1215–70), the leader of the crusade of 1248.

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155 1. **The Saturday Review,** begun in 1855, was pronouncedly conservative in politics. It devoted much space to pure criticism and scholarship, and Arnold's essays are frequently criticized in its columns.

2. He died on the 17th of March, A.D. 180. [Arnold.]

156 1. **Juvenal's sixth satire** is a scathing arraignment of the vices and follies of the women of Rome during the reign of Domitian.

2. See Juvenal, *Sat.* 3, 76.

3. Because he lacks an inspired poet (to sing his praises). Horace, *Odes*, IV, 9, 28.

157 1. **Avidius Cassius,** a distinguished general, declared himself Emperor in Syria in 175 A.D. Aurelius proceeded against him, deploring the necessity of taking up arms against a trusted officer. Cassius was slain by his own officers while M. Aurelius was still in Illyria.

2. **Commodus.** Emperor of Rome, 180–192 A.D. He was dissolute and tyrannical.

3. **Attalus,** a Roman citizen, was put to death with other Christians in A.D. 177.

4. **Polycarp,** Bishop of Smyrna, and one of the Apostolic Fathers, suffered martyrdom in 155 A.D.

159 1. **Tacitus,** *Ab Excessu Augusti*, XV, 44.

161 1. **Claude Fleury** (1640–1723), French ecclesiastical historian, author of the *Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 20 vols., 1691.

163 1. *Med.*, I, 12.

2. *Ibid.*, I, 14.

3. *Ibid.*, IV, 24.

164 1. *Ibid.*, III, 4.

165 1. *Ibid.*, V, 6.

2. *Ibid.*, IX, 42.

3. **Lucius Annæus Seneca** (*c.* 3 B.C.–A.D. 65), statesman and philosopher. His twelve so-called *Dialogues* are Stoic sermons of a practical and earnest character.

166 1. *Med.*, III, 2.

167 1. *Ibid.*, V, 5.

2. *Ibid.*, VIII, 34.

168 1. *Ibid.*, IV, 3.

169 1. *Ibid.*, I, 17.

2. **Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Domitian.** Roman Emperors, 14–37 A.D., 37–41 A.D., 54–68 A.D., and 81–96 A.D.

3. *Med.*, IV, 28.

4. *Ibid.*, V, 11.

170 1. *Ibid.*, X, 8.

171 1. *Ibid.*, IV, 32.

2. *Ibid.*, V, 33.

3. *Ibid.*, IX, 30.

4. *Ibid.*, VII, 55.

172 1. *Ibid.*, VI, 48.

2. *Ibid.*, IX, 3.

173 1. Matt. XVII, 17.

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2. *Med.*, x, 15.
3. *Ibid.*, vi, 45.
4. *Ibid.*, v, 8.
5. *Ibid.*, vii, 55.

174 1. *Ibid.*, iv, 1.
2. *Ibid.*, x, 31.
3. *Ibid.*

175 1. **Alogi.** An ancient sect that rejected the Apocalypse and the Gospel of St. John.

2. **Gnosis.** Knowledge of spiritual truth or of matters commonly conceived to pertain to faith alone, such as was claimed by the Gnostics, a heretical Christian sect of the second century.

3. The correct reading is *tendebantque* (*Æneid*, vi, 314), which Arnold has altered to apply to the present case.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CELTS TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

176 1. From *On The Study of Celtic Literature*, London, 1867, chap. vi. It was previously published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, vols. xiii and xiv, March–July, 1866. In the Introduction to the book Arnold says: "The following remarks on the study of Celtic literature formed the substance of four lectures given by me last year and the year before in the chair of poetry at Oxford." The chapter is slightly abridged in the present selection.

177 1. *Paradise Lost*, iii, 32–35.
2. *Tasso*, i, 2, 304–05.
3. **Menander.** The most famous Greek poet of the New Comedy (342–291 B.C.).

179 1. **Gemeinheit.** Arnold defines the word five lines below.

2. See *The Function of Criticism*, *Selections*, Note 2, p. 42.

3. **Bossuet.** See *The Function of Criticism*, *Selections*, Note 2, p. 49.

4. **Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke** (1678–1751), English statesman and man of letters, was author of the *Idea of a Patriot King*. Arnold is inclined to overestimate the quality of his style.

180 1. **Taliessin** and **Llywarch Hen** are the names of Welsh bards, supposedly of the late sixth century, whose poems are contained in the *Red Book of Hergest*, a manuscript formerly preserved in Jesus College, Oxford, and now in the Bodleian. Nothing further is known of them. **Ossian, Ossin,** or **Oisin,** was a legendary Irish third century hero and poet, the son of Finn. In Scotland the Ossianic revival was due to James Macpherson. See Note 1, p. 181.

2. From the *Black Book of Caermarthen*, 19.

181 1. **James Macpherson** (1736–96) published anonymously in 1760 his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the*

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Highlands of Scotland and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language. This was followed by an epic *Fingal* and other poems. Their authenticity was early doubted and a controversy followed. They are now generally believed to be forgeries. The passage quoted, as well as references to Selma, "woody Morven," and "echoing Lora" (not *Sora*), is from *Carthon: a Poem*.

182 1. **Werther.** Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774) was a product of the *Sturm und Drang* movement in German literature, and responsible for its sentimental excesses. Goethe mentions Ossian in connection with Homer in *Werther*, book II, " am 12. October," and translates several passages of considerable length toward the close of this book.

2. **Prometheus.** An unfinished drama of Goethe's, of which a fine fragment remains.

183 1. For **Llywarch Hen,** see Note 1, p. 180. The present quotation is from book II of the *Red Book*. A translation of the poem differing somewhat from the one quoted by Arnold is contained in W. F. Skene's *The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, Edinburgh, 1868.

2. From *On this day I complete my thirty-sixth year*, 1824.

3. From *Euthanasia*, 1812.

184 1. **Manfred, Lara, Cain.** Heroes of Byron's poems so named.

2. From *Paradise Lost*, I, 105–09.

185 1. Rhyme, — the most striking characteristic of our modern poetry as distinguished from that of the ancients, and a main source, to our poetry, of its magic and charm, of what we call its *romantic element* — rhyme itself, all the weight of evidence tends to show, comes into our poetry from the Celts. [Arnold.] A different explanation is given by J. Schipper, *A History of English Versification*, Oxford, 1910: " End-rhyme or full-rhyme seems to have arisen independently and without historical connection in several nations. . . . Its adoption into all modern literature is due to the extensive use made of it in the hymns of the church."

2. Lady Guest's *Mabinogion, Math the Son of Mathonwy*, ed. 1849, III, 239.

3. *Mabinogion, Kilhwch and Olwen*, II, 275.

186 1. *Mabinogion, Peredur the Son of Evrawc*, I, 324.

2. *Mabinogion, Geraint the Son of Erbin*, II, 112.

187 1. **Novalis.** The pen-name of **Friedrich von Hardenberg** (1772–1801), sometimes called the " Prophet of Romanticism." See Carlyle's essay on Novalis.

2. For **Rückert,** see *Wordsworth, Selections,* Note 4, p. 224.

3. Take the following attempt to render the natural magic supposed to pervade Tieck's poetry: " In diesen Dichtungen herrscht eine geheimnissvolle Innigkeit, ein sonderbares Einverständniss mit der Natur, besonders mit der

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Pflanzen- und Steinreich. Der Leser fühlt sich da wie in einem verzauberten Walde; er hört die unterirdischen Quellen melodisch rauschen; wildfremde Wunderblumen schauen ihn an mit ihren bunten schnsüchtigen Augen; unsichtbare Lippen küssen seine Wangen mit neckender Zärtlichkeit; *hohe Pilze, wie goldne Glocken, wachsen klingend empor am Fusse der Bäume*"; and so on. Now that stroke of the *hohe Pilze*, the great funguses, would have been impossible to the tact and delicacy of a born lover of nature like the Celt; and could only have come from a German who has *hineinstudirt* himself into natural magic. It is a crying false note, which carries us at once out of the world of nature-magic, and the breath of the woods, into the world of theatre-magic and the smell of gas and orange-peel. [Arnold.]

Johann Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853) was one of the most prominent of the German romanticists. He was especially felicitous in the rehandling of the old German fairy tales. The passage quoted above is from Heine's *Germany*, Part II, book II, chap. II. The following is the translation of C. G. Leland, slightly altered: "In these compositions we feel a mysterious depth of meaning, a marvellous union with nature, especially with the realm of plants and stones. The reader seems to be in an enchanted forest; he hears subterranean springs and streams rustling melodiously, and his own name whispered by the trees. Broad-leaved clinging plants wind vexingly about his feet, wild and strange wonder-flowers look at him with vari-colored longing eyes, invisible lips kiss his cheeks with mocking tenderness, great funguses like golden bells grow singing about the roots of trees."

4. *Winter's Tale*, IV, iii, 118–20.

5. Arnold doubtless refers to the passage in *The Solitary Reaper* referred to in a similar connection in the essay on Maurice de Guérin, though Wordsworth has written two poems *To the Cuckoo*.

6. The passage on the mountain birch-tree, which is quoted in the essay on Maurice de Guérin, is from Sénancour's *Obermann*, letter 11. For his delicate appreciation of the Easter daisy see *Obermann*, letter 91.

188 1. Pope's *Iliad*, VIII, 687.

2. Propertius, *Elegies*, book I, 20, 21–22: "The band of heroes covered the pleasant beach with leaves and branches woven together."

3. *Idylls*, XIII, 34. The present reading of the line gives ἔκειτο, μεγα: "A meadow lay before them, very good for beds."

4. From the *Ode to a Grecian Urn*.

189 1. That is, *Dedication*.

2. From the *Ode to a Nightingale*.

3. *Ibid*.

190 1. Virgil, *Eclogues*, VII, 45.

2. *Ibid*, II, 47–48: "Plucking pale violets and the tallest

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poppies, she joins with them the narcissus and the flower of the fragrant dill."

3. *Ibid.*, II, 51–52: "I will gather quinces, white with delicate down, and chestnuts."

4. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 249–52.

5. *Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 58–59.

6. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 83–85.

191 1. *Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 1 *ff.*

GEORGE SAND

192 1. Reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review* for June, 1877, in *Mixed Essays*, Smith, Elder & Co., 1879. **Amandine Lucile Aurore Dudevant**, née **Dupin** (1804–76), was the most prolific woman writer of France. The pseudonym **George Sand** was a combination of George, the typical Berrichon name, and Sand, abbreviated from (Jules) Sandeau, in collaboration with whom she began her literary career.

2. **Indiana**, George Sand's first novel, 1832.

3. **Nohant** is a village of Berry, one of the ancient provinces of France, comprising the modern departments of Cher and Indre. The **Indre** and the **Creuse** are its chief rivers. **Vierzon, Châteauroux, Le Châtre**, and **Ste.-Sévère** are towns of the province. **Le Puy** is in the neighboring department of Haute-Loire, and **La Marche** is in the department of Vosges. For the **Vallée Noire** see Sand's *The Miller of Angibault*, chap. III, etc.

4. **Jeanne.** The first of a series of novels in which the pastoral element prevails. It was published in 1844.

5. The **Pierres Jaunâtres** (or **Jomâtres**) is a district in the mountains of the Creuse (see *Jeanne*, *Prologue*). **Toulx Ste.-Croix** is a ruined Gallic town (*Jeanne*, chap. I). For the druidical stones of **Mont Barlot** see *Jeanne*, chap. VII.

193 1. **Cassini's great map.** A huge folio volume containing 183 charts of the various districts of France, published by Mess. Maraldi and Cassini de Thury, Paris, 1744.

2. For an interesting description of the **patache**, or rustic carriage, see George Sand's *Miller of Angibault*, chap. II.

3. **landes.** An infertile moor.

194 1. **Maurice and Solange.** See, for example, the *Letters of a Traveller*.

2. **Chopin.** George Sand's friendship for the composer Chopin began in 1837.

195 1. **Jules Michelet** (1798–1874), French historian.

2. **her death.** George Sand died at Nohant, June 8, 1876.

196 1. From the *Journal d'un Voyageur*, September 15, 1870, ed. 1871, p. 2.

2. **Consuelo** (1842–44) is George Sand's best-known novel.

3. **Edmée, Geneviève, Germain.** Characters in the novels *Mauprat*, *André*, and *La Mare au Diable*.

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4. **Lettres d'un Voyageur, Mauprat, François le Champi.** Published in 1830–36, 1836, and 1848.

5. **F. W. H. Myers** (1843–1901), poet and essayist. See his *Essays, Modern*, ed. 1883, pp. 70–103.

197 1. **Valvèdre.** Published in 1861.

2. **Werther.** See *The Contribution of the Celts, Selections*, Note 1, p. 182.

3. **Corinne.** An esthetic romance (1807) by Mme. de Staël.

4. **Valentine** (1832), George Sand's second novel, pointed out "the dangers and pains of an ill-assorted marriage." **Lélia** (1833) was a still more outspoken diatribe against society and the marriage law.

199 1. From *Lélia*, chap. LXVII.

2. **Jacques** (1834), the hero of which is George Sand in man's disguise, sets forth the author's doctrine of free love.

3. From *Jacques*, letter 95.

200 1. From *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, letter 9.

2. *Ibid.*, à Rollinat, September, 1834.

203 1. **Hans Holbein,** the younger (1497–1543), German artist.

205 1. From *La Mare au Diable*, chap. I.

2. *Ibid.*, *The Author to the Reader.*

206 1. *Ibid.*, chap. I.

207 1. *Ibid.*, chap. I.

208 1. From *Impressions et Souvenirs*, ed. 1873, p. 135.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

3. From Wordsworth's *Lines Composed a few Miles above Tintern Abbey.*

4. From *Impressions et Souvenirs*, p. 136.

209 1. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

210 1. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

211 1. See *The Function of Criticism, Selections*, p. 29.

2. **Émile Zola** (1840–1902), French novelist, was the apostle of the "realistic" or "naturalistic" school. *L'Assommoir* (1877) depicts especially the vice of drunkenness.

212 1. From *Journal d'un Voyageur*, February 10, 1871, p. 305.

2. **Émile Louis Victor de Laveleye** (1822–92), Belgian economist. He was especially interested in bimetallism, primitive property, and nationalism.

213 1. From *Journal d'un Voyageur*, December 21, 1870, p. 202.

214 1. *Ibid.*, December 21, 1870, p. 220.

215 1. *Ibid.*, February 7, 1871, p. 228.

2. *Round my House: Notes of Rural Life in France in Peace and War* (1876), by **Philip Gilbert Hamerton.** See especially chapters XI and XII.

3. **Barbarians, Philistines, Populace.** Arnold's designations for the aristocratic, middle, and lower classes of England in *Culture and Anarchy.*

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216 1. **Paul Amand Challemel-Lacour** (1827–96), French statesman and man of letters.

2. See *The Function of Criticism*, *Selections*, Note 4, p. 44.

3. From *Journal d'un Voyageur*, February 10, 1871, p. 309.

217 1. The closing sentence of the Nicene Creed with *expecto* changed to *exspectat*. For the English translation see Morning Prayer in the Episcopal Prayer Book; for the Greek and Latin see Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, II, 58, 59.

WORDSWORTH

218 1. Published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1879, vol. XL; as Preface to *The Poems of Wordsworth*, chosen and edited by Arnold in 1879; and in *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series, 1888.

219 1. **Rydal Mount.** Wordsworth's home in the Lake District from 1813 until his death in 1850.

2. **1842.** The year of publication of the two-volume edition of Tennyson's poems, containing *Locksley Hall*, *Ulysses*, etc.

221 1. **candid friend.** Arnold himself.

222 1. The *Biographie Universelle, ou Dictionnaire historique* of F. X. de Feller (1735–1802) was originally published in 1781.

2. **Henry Cochin.** A brilliant lawyer and writer of Paris, 1687–1747.

223 1. **Amphictyonic Court.** An association of Ancient Greek communities centering in a shrine.

224 1. **Gottlieb Friedrich Klopstock** (1724–1803) was author of *Der Messias*.

2. **Lessing.** See *Sweetness and Light*, *Selections*, Note 2, p. 271.

3. **Johann Ludwig Uhland** (1787–1862), romantic lyric poet.

4. **Friedrich Rückert** (1788–1866) was the author of *Liebesfrühling* and other poems.

5. **Heine.** See *Heinrich Heine*, *Selections*, pp. 112–144.

6. The greatest poems of **Vicenzo da Filicaja** (1642–1707) are six odes inspired by the victory of Sobieski.

7. **Vittorio, Count Alfieri** (1749–1803), Italian dramatist. His best-known drama is his *Saul*.

8. **Manzoni** (1785–1873) was a poet and novelist, author of *I Promessi Sposi*.

9. **Giacomo, Count Leopardi** (1798–1837), Italian poet. His writings are characterized by deep-seated melancholy.

10. **Jean Racine** (1639–99), tragic dramatist.

11. **Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux** (1636–1711), poet and critic.

12. **André de Chénier** (1762–94), poet, author of *Jeune Captive*, etc.

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13. **Pierre Jean de Béranger** (1780–1857), song-writer.

14. **Alphonse Marie Louis de Prat de Lamartine** (1790–1869), poet, historian, and statesman.

15. **Louis Charles Alfred de Musset** (1810–57), poet, play-writer, and novelist.

228 1. From *The Recluse*, l. 754.

229 1. *Paradise Lost*, II, 553–54.

230 1. *The Tempest*, IV, i, 156–58.

2. **criticism of life.** See *The Study of Poetry, Selections*, Note 1, p. 57.

231 1. *Discourses* of Epictetus, trans. Long, 1903, vol. I, book II, chap. XXIII, p. 248.

232 1. **Théophile Gautier.** A noted French poet, critic, and novelist, and a leader of the French Romantic Movement (1811–72).

2. *The Recluse*, ll. 767–71.

3. *Æneid*, VI, 662.

233 1. **Leslie Stephen.** English biographer and literary critic (1832–1904). He was the first editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Arnold quotes from the essay on *Wordsworth's Ethics* in *Hours in a Library* (1874–79), vol. III.

2. *Excursion*, IV, 73–76.

234 1. *Ibid.*, II, 10–17.

2. *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.*

235 1. *Excursion*, IX, 293–302.

236 1. See p. 232.

237 1. **the "not ourselves."** Arnold quotes his own definition of God as "the enduring power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness." See *Literature and Dogma*, chap. I.

2. The opening sentence of a famous criticism of the *Excursion* published in the *Edinburgh Review* for November, 1814, no. 47. It was written by **Francis Jeffrey, Lord Jeffrey** (1773–1850), Scottish judge and literary critic, and first editor of the *Edinburgh Review*.

238 1. *Macbeth*, III, ii.

2. *Paradise Lost*, VII, 23–24.

3. *The Recluse*, l. 831.

239 1. From Burns's *A Bard's Epitaph*.

240 1. The correct title is *The Solitary Reaper*.

SWEETNESS AND LIGHT

242 1. This selection is the first chapter of *Culture and Anarchy*. It originally formed a part of the last lecture delivered by Arnold as Professor of Poetry at Oxford. *Culture and Anarchy* was first printed in *The Cornhill Magazine*, July 1867,– August, 1868, vols. XVI–XVIII. It was published as a book in 1869.

2. For **Sainte-Beuve,** see *The Study of Poetry, Selections*, Note 2, p. 56. The article referred to appeared in the

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Quarterly Review for January, 1866, vol. CXIX, p. 80. It finds fault with Sainte-Beuve's lack of conclusiveness, and describes him as having "spent his life in fitting his mind to be an elaborate receptacle for well-arranged doubts." In this respect a comparison is made with Arnold's "graceful but perfectly unsatisfactory essays."

243 1. From Montesquieu's *Discours sur les motifs qui doivent nous encourager aux sciences, prononcé le* 15 *Novembre*, 1725. Montesquieu's *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Laboulaye, VII, 78.

244 1. **Thomas Wilson** (1663–1755) was consecrated Bishop of Sodor and Man in 1698. His episcopate was marked by a number of reforms in the Isle of Man. The opening pages of Arnold's *Preface* to *Culture and Anarchy* are devoted to an appreciation of Wilson. He says: " On a lower range than the *Imitation*, and awakening in our nature chords less poetical and delicate, the *Maxims* of Bishop Wilson are, as a religious work, far more solid. To the most sincere ardor and unction, Bishop Wilson unites, in these *Maxims*, that downright honesty and plain good sense which our English race has so powerfully applied to the divine impossibilities of religion; by which it has brought religion so much into practical life, and has done its allotted part in promoting upon earth the kingdom of God."

2. **will of God prevail.** *Maxim* 450 reads: " A prudent Christian will resolve at all times to sacrifice his inclinations to reason, and his reason to the will and word of God."

247 1. From Bishop Wilson's *Sacra Privata*, Noon Prayers, *Works*, ed. 1781, I, 199.

248 1. **John Bright** (1811–89) was a leader with Cobden in the agitation for repeal of the Corn Laws and other measures of reform, and was one of England's greatest masters of oratory.

2. **Frederic Harrison** (1831–), English jurist and historian, was president of the English Positivist Committee, 1880–1905. His *Creed of a Layman* (1907) is a statement of his religious position.

249 1. See *The Function of Criticism, Selections*, Note 2, p. 37.

253 1. 1 Tim., IV, 8.

2. The first of the "Rules of Health and Long Life " in *Poor Richard's Almanac* for December, 1742. The quotation should read: "as the Constitution of thy Body allows of."

3. Epictetus, *Encheiridion*, chap. XLI.

4. **Sweetness and Light.** The phrase is from Swift's *The Battle of the Books*, *Works*, ed. Scott, 1824, X, 240. In the apologue of the Spider and the Bee the superiority of the ancient over the modern writers is thus summarized: " Instead of dirt and poison we have rather chose to fill our hives with honey and wax, thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light."

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256 1. **Independents.** The name applied in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the denomination now known as Congregationalists.

2. From Burke's Speech on *Conciliation with America*, *Works*, ed. 1834, I, 187.

3. 1 Pet., III, 8.

258 1. **Epsom.** A market town in Surrey, where are held the famous Derby races, founded in 1780.

259 1. Sallust's *Catiline*, chap. LII, § 22.

2. The **Daily Telegraph** was begun in June, 1855, as a twopenny newspaper. It became the great organ of the middle classes and has been distinguished for its enterprise in many fields. Up to 1878 it was consistently Liberal in politics. It is a frequent object of Arnold's irony as the mouthpiece of English philistinism.

261 1. **Young Leo** (or **Leo Adolescens**) is Arnold's name for the typical writer of the *Daily Telegraph* (see above). He is a prominent character of *Friendship's Garland*.

262 1. **Edmond Beales** (1803–81), political agitator, was especially identified with the movement for manhood suffrage and the ballot, and was the leading spirit in two large popular demonstrations in London in 1866.

2. **Charles Bradlaugh** (1833–91), freethought advocate and politician. His efforts were especially directed toward maintaining the freedom of the press in issuing criticisms on religious belief and sociological questions. In 1880 he became a Member of Parliament, and began a long and finally successful struggle for the right to take his seat in Parliament without the customary oath on the Bible.

3. **John Henry Newman** (1801–90) was the leader of the Oxford Movement in the English Church. His *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864) was a defense of his religious life and an account of the causes which led him from Anglicanism to Romanism. For his hostility to Liberalism see the *Apologia*, ed. 1907, pp. 34, 212, and 288.

4. *Æneid*, I, 460.

263 1 **The Reform Bill of 1832** abolished fifty-six "rotten" boroughs and made other changes in representation to Parliament, thus transferring a large share of political power from the landed aristocracy to the middle classes.

2. **Robert Lowe** (1811–92), afterwards Viscount Sherbrooke, held offices in the Board of Education and Board of Trade. He was liberal, but opposed the Reform Bill of that party in 1866–67. His speeches on the subject were printed in 1867.

266 1. **Jacobinism.** The *Société des Jacobins* was the most famous of the political clubs of the French Revolution. Later the term **Jacobin** was applied to any promulgator of extreme revolutionary or radical opinions.

2. See *ante*, Note 2, p. 248.

3. **Auguste Comte** (1798–1857), French philosopher and

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founder of Positivism. This system of thought attempts to base religion on the verifiable facts of existence, opposes devotion to the study of metaphysics, and substitutes the worship of Humanity for supernatural religion.

4. **Richard Congreve** (1818–99) resigned a fellowship at Oxford in 1855, and devoted the remainder of his life to the propagation of the Positive philosophy.

267 1. **Jeremy Bentham** (1748–1832), philosopher and jurist, was leader of the English school of Utilitarianism, which recognizes "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" as the proper foundation of morality and legislation.

2. **Ludwig Preller** (1809–61), German philologist and antiquarian.

268 1. **Book of Job.** Arnold must have read Franklin's piece hastily, since he has mistaken a bit of ironic trifling for a serious attempt to rewrite the Scriptures. The *Proposed New Version of the Bible* is merely a bit of amusing burlesque in which six verses of the Book of Job are rewritten in the style of modern politics. According to Mr. William Temple Franklin the *Bagatelles*, of which the *Proposed New Version* is a part, were "chiefly written by Dr. Franklin for the amusement of his intimate society in London and Paris." See Franklin's *Complete Works*, ed. 1844, II, 164.

2. **The Deontology,** or *The Science of Morality*, was arranged and edited by John Bowring, in 1834, two years after Bentham's death, and it is doubtful how far it represents Bentham's thoughts.

3. **Henry Thomas Buckle** (1821–62) was the author of the *History of Civilization in England*, a book which, though full of inaccuracies, has had a great influence on the theory and method of historical writing.

4. **Mr. Mill.** See *Marcus Aurelius, Selections*, Note 2, p. 145.

269 1. The article from which Arnold quotes these extracts is not Frederic Harrison's *Culture: A Dialogue*, but an earlier essay in the *Fortnightly Review* for March 1, 1867, called *Our Venetian Constitution*. See pages 276–77 of the article.

271 1. **Peter Abelard** (1079–1142) was a scholastic philosopher and a leader in the more liberal thought of his day.

2. **Gotthold Ephraim Lessing** (1729–81), German critic and dramatist. His best-known writings are the epoch-making critical work, *Laokoön* (1766), and the drama *Minna von Barnhelm* (1767). His ideas were in the highest degree stimulating and fruitful to the German writers who followed him.

3. **Johann Gottfried von Herder** (1744–1803), a voluminous and influential German writer, was a pioneer of the Romantic Movement. He championed adherence to the national type in literature, and helped to found the historical method in literature and science.

271 1. *Confessions of St. Augustine*, XIII, 18, 22, Everyman's Library ed., p. 326.

HEBRAISM AND HELLENISM

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273 **1.** The present selection comprises chapter IV, of *Culture and Anarchy*. In the preceding chapter Arnold has been pointing out the imperfection of the various classes of English society, which he describes as "Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace." For the correction of this imperfection he pleads for "some public recognition and establishment of our best self, or right reason." In chapter III, he has shown how "our habits and practice oppose themselves to such a recognition." He now proposes to find, "beneath our actual habits and practice, the very ground and cause out of which they spring." Then follows the selection here given.

Professor Gates has pointed out the fact that Arnold probably borrows the terms here contrasted from Heine. In *Über Ludwig Börne* (*Werke*, ed. Stuttgart, x, 12), Heine says: "All men are either Jews or Hellenes, men ascetic in their instincts, hostile to culture, spiritual fanatics, or men of vigorous good cheer, full of the pride of life, Naturalists." For Heine's own relation to Hebraism and Hellenism, see the present selection, p. 275.

2. See *Sweetness and Light*, *Selections*, Note 1, p. 244. *Maxim* 452 reads: "Two things a Christian will never do — never go against the best light he has, this will prove his sincerity, and, 2, to take care that his light be not darkness, i.e., that he mistake not his rule by which he ought to go."

274 **1.** 2 Pet. I, 4.

2. Frederick William Robertson (1816–53) began his famous ministry at Brighton in 1847. He was a man of deep spirituality and great sincerity. The latter part of his life was clouded by opposition roused by his sympathy with the revolutionary ideas of the 1848 epoch and by the mental trouble which eventually resulted in his death. The sermon referred to seems to be the first Advent Lecture on *The Greek*. Arnold objects to Robertson's rather facile summarizing. Four characteristics are mentioned as marking Grecian life and religion: restlessness, worldliness, worship of the beautiful, and worship of the human. The second of these has three results, disappointment, degradation, disbelief in immortality.

275 **1. Heinrich Heine.** See *Heine, Selections*, pp. 112–144.

2. Prov. XXIX, 18.

3. Ps. CXII, 1.

277 **1.** Rom. III, 31.

2. Zech. IX, 13.

3. Prov. XVI, 22.

4. John I, 4–9; 8–12; Luke II, 32, etc.

5. John VIII, 32.

6. *Nichomachæan Ethics*, bk. II, chap. III.

7. Jas. I, 25.

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8. *Discourses of Epictetus*, bk. II, chap. XIX, trans. Long, I, 214 *ff.*

278 1. **Learning to die.** Arnold seems to be thinking of *Phædo*, 64, *Dialogues*, II, 202: "For I deem that the true votary of philosophy is likely to be misunderstood by other men; they do not perceive that he is always pursuing death and dying; and if this be so, and he has had the desire of death all his life long, why when his time comes should he repine at that which he has been always pursuing and desiring?" Plato goes on to show that life is best when it is most freed from the concerns of the body. Cf. also *Phædrus* (*Dialogues*, II, 127) and *Gorgias* (*Dialogues*, II, 369).

2. 2 Cor. v, 14.

3. See Aristotle, *Nichomachæan Ethics*, bk. X, chaps. VIII, IX.

4. *Phædo*, 82D, *Dialogues*, I, 226.

279 1. Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, bk. IV, chap. VIII, § 6.

280 1. **Edward Bouverie Pusey** (1800–82), English divine and leader of the High Church party in the Oxford Movement.

281 1. Zech. VIII, 23.

2. **my Saviour banished joy.** The sentence is an incorrect quotation from George Herbert's *The Size*, the fifth stanza of which begins: —

> "Thy Savior sentenced joy,
> And in the flesh condemn'd it as unfit, —
> At least in lump."

3. Eph. v, 6.

282 1. The first two books. [Arnold.]

2. See Rom. III, 2.

3. See Cor. III, 19.

283 1. **Phædo.** In this dialogue Plato attempts to substantiate the doctrine of immortality by narrating the last hours of Socrates and his conversation on this subject when his own death was at hand.

284 1. **Renascence.** I have ventured to give to the foreign word *Renaissance* — destined to become of more common use amongst us as the movement which it denotes comes, as it will come, increasingly to interest us, — an English form. [Arnold.]

EQUALITY

289 1. This essay, originally an address delivered at the Royal Institution, was published in the *Fortnightly Review*, for March, 1878, and reprinted in *Mixed Essays*, 1879. In the present selection the opening pages have been omitted. Arnold begins with a statement of England's tendency to maintain a condition of inequality between classes. This is reinforced by the English freedom of bequest, a freedom greater than in most of the Continental countries. The question of the advisability of altering the English law of bequest

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is a matter not of abstract right, but of expediency. That the maintenance of inequality is expedient for English civilization and welfare is generally assumed. Whether or not this assumption is well founded, Arnold proposes to examine in the concluding pages. As a preliminary step he defines civilization as the humanization of man in society. Then follows the selected passage.

2. **Isocrates.** An Attic orator (436–338 B.C.). He was an ardent advocate of Greek unity. The passage quoted occurs in the *Panegyricus*, § 50, *Orations*, ed. 1894, p. 67.

290 1. **Giacomo Antonelli** (1806–76), Italian cardinal. From 1850 until his death his activity was chiefly devoted to the struggle between the Papacy and the Italian Risorgimento.

291 1. **famous passage.** The *Introduction* to his *Age of Louis XIV*.

293 1. **Laveleye.** See *George Sand, Selections*, Note 2, p. 212.

2. **Sir Thomas Erskine May, Lord Farnborough** (1815–86), constitutional jurist. Arnold in the omitted portion of the present essay has quoted several sentences from his *History of Democracy*: "France has aimed at social equality. The fearful troubles through which she has passed have checked her prosperity, demoralised her society, and arrested the intellectual growth of her people. Yet is she high, if not the first, in the scale of civilised nations."

3. **Hamerton.** See *George Sand, Selections*, Note 2, p. 215. The quotation is from *Round My House*, chap. XI, ed. 1876, pp. 229–30.

294 1. **Charles Sumner** (1811–74), American statesman, was the most brilliant and uncompromising of the anti-slavery leaders.

295 1. **Alsace.** The people of Alsace, though German in origin, showed a very strong feeling against Prussian rule in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. In September, 1872, 45,000 elected to be still French and transferred their domicile to France.

296 1. **Michelet.** See *George Sand, Selections*, Note 1, p. 195.

298 1. The chorus of a popular music-hall song of the time. From it was derived the word *jingoism*. For the original application of this term see Webster's *Dictionary*.

2. **Dwight L. Moody** (1837–99) and **Ira D. Sankey** (1840–1908), the famous American evangelists, held notable revival meetings in England in 1873–75.

299 1. See, e.g., *Heine, Selections*, p. 129.

2. **Goldwin Smith.** See Note 2, p. 301.

301 1. See Milton's *Colasterion*, *Works*, ed. 1843, III, 445 and 452.

2. **Goldwin Smith** (1824–1910), British publicist and historian, has taken an active part in educational questions both in England and America. The passage quoted below is from an article entitled *Falkland and the Puritans*, published in the *Contemporary Review* as a reply to Arnold's

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essay on Falkland. See *Lectures and Essays*, New York, 1881.

3. **John Hutchinson** (1616–64), Puritan soldier. The *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, written by his wife Lucy, but not published until 1806, are remarkable both for the picture which they give of the man and the time, and also for their simple beauty of style. For the passage quoted see Everyman's Library ed., pp. 182–83.

4. **pædobaptism.** Infant baptism.

303 1. Man disquiets himself, but God manages the matter. For **Bossuet** see *The Function of Criticism, Selections*, Note 2, p. 49.

2. Prov. XIX, 21.

3. So in the original. [Arnold.]

304 1. **Bright.** See *Sweetness and Light, Selections*, Note 1, p. 248.

2. **Richard Cobden** (1804–65), English manufacturer and Radical politician. He was a leader in the agitation for repeal of the Corn Laws and in advocacy of free trade.

305 1. Prov. XIV, 6.

2. Compare *Culture and Anarchy*, chaps. II and III, and *Ecce Convertimur ad Gentes, Irish Essays*, ed. 1903, p. 115.

307 1. **Samuel Pepys** (1633–1703), English diarist.

310 1. **young lion.** See *Sweetness and Light, Selections*, Note 1, p. 261.

312 1. **Mill.** See *Marcus Aurelius, Selections*, Note 2, p. 145.

2. **Spencer Compton Cavendish** (1833–1908), Marquis of **Hartington** (since 1891 Duke of Devonshire), became Liberal leader in the House of Commons after the defeat and withdrawal of Gladstone in January, 1875.

313 1. **Menander.** See *Contribution of the Celts, Selections*, Note 3, p. 177.

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